



# The Military & Political Succession in China

LEADERSHIP  
INSTITUTIONS  
BELIEFS

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# The Military & Political Succession in China

**LEADERSHIP  
INSTITUTIONS  
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*Michael D. Swaine*

*A Project AIR FORCE  
Report prepared for the  
United States Air Force*

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## **PREFACE**

This Report was prepared as part of a research project on "China's Future Military-Strategic Role and Its Implications for Regional Defense Planning." The project was undertaken in the National Security Strategies Program of Project AIR FORCE. Additional support was provided by the International Policy Department through flexible funds intended to identify new areas for RAND research. The project has explored:

- The impact of China's internal leadership conflicts on the balance between professionalism and politicization in the armed forces;
- The political consequences of the changes in U.S.-China relations since the Tiananmen crisis on regional security;
- The likely near- to mid-term implications of China's domestic political uncertainties for the modernization goals of the People's Liberation Army (PLA); and
- The longer-run effects of China's internal political evolution on future U.S.-China relations, and the political role of the Chinese military in this process.

The findings documented in this Report should be of interest to analysts and policymakers seeking to assess how China's patterns of internal and institutional development will affect Beijing's incentives and opportunities for collaboration with other regional actors and with the United States.

This Report was completed prior to the mid-October 1992 proceedings of the 14th Congress of the Chinese Communist Party. Since that event resulted in major personnel changes at the highest levels of the party and military leadership, a postscript has been added that discusses those changes and their implications for the PLA's role in the succession.



## **SUMMARY**

After forty years of supposed civilian party rule and extensive functional specialization of elites, the military remains the ultimate foundation for and arbiter of power among contending factions atop the Chinese leadership system. This is especially true today given the highly unstable and unprecedented conditions confronting China, marked by widespread social discontent and extremely low party prestige, a weak, divided, and unpopular leadership, and the imminent passing of the original revolutionary generation of elder Chinese powerholders. All these factors, when combined with the historical centrality of Chinese military power and the legacy of communist rule by a fused party-army political structure, suggest that it is virtually impossible to assess the dynamics of China's coming succession struggle and China's future political evolution without fully analyzing the role of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) in elite politics.

This Report does not claim to provide a definitive analysis of this topic. Rather, it constitutes a first step toward improving our understanding of the PLA's potential role in leadership conflict. The intent is to delineate more clearly those features of the Chinese politico-military system most relevant to military involvement in elite politics, to gain a better understanding of the variables influencing such involvement and the range and manner of their interaction, and thus to provide a basis for evaluating the general likelihood of different scenarios of possible military intervention in a future succession struggle.

The Report systematically examines three major components of China's politico-military system:

- Party-military leadership
- Military organizations
- Military beliefs and attitudes toward political involvement

On the basis of this analysis, the Report delineates twenty-three general and specific features of the Chinese politico-military system relevant to military involvement in elite politics, abbreviated as follows:

1. Ultimate political authority in China remains highly personalized, militarized, and concentrated in the hands of a few individuals.
2. Supreme power in this system of rule is held by a small number of senior revolutionary veterans with broad experience as both military and party leaders.
3. Party and military elites and institutions become increasingly distinct as one moves down the leadership structure.
4. The highly personalized character of authority relationships, combined with the absence of an institutionalized structure of leadership succession, has produced a complex and often unstable pattern of intense political competition at the apex of the Chinese politico-military system.

5. This system has also produced a highly interactive pattern of party and military politics since 1949, especially over basic issues of national policy and ultimate political power. As a result, individual military leaders and armed units have often been drawn into leadership conflict on a partisan basis, in support of specific party leaders or groups of such leaders.

6. Those factional support networks of greatest significance to a future leadership crisis are concentrated in the military bureaucracy, connecting both party and military elders with younger, powerful central and regional military elites. The key organizational structure that provides the framework for such personal linkages is the extended PLA field army system, although other factors also play a very important, albeit secondary, role in the formation of factions.

7. China's system of military command and control and party supervision embodies most of the features found in the politico-military system as a whole: it is highly personalized, centralized along vertical lines, and compartmentalized. This system presents major irregularities in procedure and potential ambiguities in authority relationships that could prove highly destabilizing in the event of a future leadership crisis at the center, especially one involving the breakdown of elder control and the emergence of open splits among the successor leadership.

8. Those characteristics of the regional military structure most relevant to political involvement present a complex picture of middle- and low-level unit-based identification, limited lateral communication (especially between officers at the division, group army, and military region levels), and in most (although not all) cases, leadership fragmentation at the upper levels, largely through the repeated intermingling by Beijing of high-level officers with differing career backgrounds. Such structures, when combined with the features of the command and control and party supervision system, suggest that major combat units within military regions exist largely as cohesive yet politically passive entities. However, the potential exists for at least some of these units to become involved in partisan political struggle in the event of severe elite instability at the top.

9. The general structural characteristics of the regional military, when combined with the personalized, factional dynamics of authority relationships, suggest that military regions and combat units in China would most likely take action during a political crisis at the center in response to a directive issued from the top of the command and control structure, although other alternatives are also possible.

10. China's senior leadership can be divided into five major elder-led factions and two "wild card" leaders. Most of these political entities enjoy the support of high-level members of the formal PLA leadership, many of whom command their own support networks within various central and regional military structures. Deng Xiaoping plays a crucial role in maintaining stability among the resulting composite factions:

- The Deng-led Second Field Army/Hong Xuezhi Faction currently enjoys a dominant position among PLA elder factions. It is linked to the Zhao Nanqi/GLD (General Logistics Department) Faction and enjoys the support of many regional PLA leaders.
- The Third Field Army Faction under Zhang Aiping is the second strongest PLA elder faction. It is closely linked to the Chi Haotian/GSD (General Staff Department) Faction.

- The Fifth Field Army/Bo Yibo Faction under Yang Dezhi can be characterized as having high status within the PLA, but little actual independent power compared to the other two major PLA elder factions. It has few identifiable supports among the formal PLA leadership.
- The Yang Shangkun Faction, allied with the Deng Faction, is unique in many ways, exhibiting great strengths in a few, narrow areas, and significant, broad-based weaknesses. It is linked to the Yang Baibing/GPD (General Political Department) Faction and enjoys significant support among armed units in and around Beijing.
- The Chen Yun/Peng Zhen Grouping is probably the least cohesive of the major elder factions, yet it is currently the most important force within the top party leadership outside the Deng Xiaoping/Yang Shangkun alliance. It is not connected to any military faction, although it does have associations with various PLA elders.
- In addition, Wang Zhen and Li Desheng stand as separate outsider "wild cards" among the elder factions, each potentially capable of influencing the political balance at the top of the Chinese leadership.<sup>1</sup> Each elder may receive significant support from factions within the regional PLA.

11. A basis exists for a political alliance between the Yang Shangkun Faction, the Chen Yun/Peng Zhen Grouping, and Wang Zhen, largely because of their common, close association with and support for the Tiananmen crackdown, and the fact that they currently wield greater political influence within the regime than their elder colleagues within the PLA.

12. However, the strongest basis for alliance exists between the two most important PLA elder factions: the Second Field Army/Hong Xuezhi Faction and the Third Field Army Faction under Zhang Aiping, because of common links to the defense industry, the Third FA backgrounds of many regional officers associated with Second FA elders, and the general history of close interaction between the two field-army systems before 1949.

13. The Fifth Field Army/Bo Yibo Faction could serve as a bridge between the two major potential factional alliances of party and military elders, or support one over the other in a confrontation.

14. The broad-based, party-army experiences of China's elder leadership stand in sharp contrast to the much narrower, essentially civilian and often technical backgrounds of China's designated successors. None possesses the political contacts, administrative capabilities, vision, and broad prestige to lead a credible, enduring successor regime.

15. The present leadership configuration of China's military regions suggests that some are capable of playing an active role in a future succession struggle, as either potential sources of military support tied to specific factions at the center, or as semi-independent actors seeking to further their interests in a more anarchic setting marked by the collapse of central political control.

16. The experiences of the Cultural Revolution, military and societal reform trends, and the Tiananmen crisis and its aftermath have generated intense confusion and much resentment,

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<sup>1</sup>Each faction or grouping is presented as a separate feature of the politico-military system in Chapter 9; hence only 17 numbered features appear in this summary.

anger, and suspicion within the ranks of the PLA officer corps over a range of issues affecting the military's involvement in leadership politics. Such views tend to be concentrated among younger PLA officers. However, the events of June 3–5, 1989, have also greatly intensified the military's traditional fear of chaos and heightened an awareness of its importance as both the defender of the party as the only viable political institution in China, and the ultimate guarantor of social order.

17. A serious gap exists between the conservative elders and most of their immediate senior supporters within the formal PLA command on the one hand, and many younger, progressive officers at lower levels in the system on the other. Between these two poles probably lies a very large middle ground of patriotic officers, strongly committed to continued military and economic modernization, uncertain about the future of one-party rule, critical of Tiananmen, and to varying degrees supportive of renewed ties with the West.

From the above core features of the politico-military system, the Report concludes that some form of military involvement in the transition period to a post-Deng Xiaoping regime is likely. Major reasons include:

- The historical legacy of PLA involvement in factional politics;
- The presence of a very influential military figure (Yang Baibing) within one of the most dominant elder factions in the top leadership and the likely resentment that his presence has produced among elements of the PLA;
- The personal links between major armed forces in Beijing (and some very important military regions) and at least two central factions;
- The extremely weak military ties of the current designated successor leadership, and its internal divisions;
- The highly personalized and ambiguous power relationships existing within the system of military command and control and party supervision over the PLA; and
- The intensity of internal turbulence among PLA officers over issues relating to party leadership and policy, especially those linked to the Tiananmen crisis.

Initially, military involvement will probably take the form of limited, rapid intervention by an alliance of party and military leaders, rather than unified, independent military intervention serving either conservative or progressive ends. Such involvement will probably be intended simply to consolidate the position of one party-army faction or coalition of factions over others in an intensifying succession struggle. It could include the use of armed units, most likely limited, at least initially, to the Beijing area and its immediate environs. Any initial military action would be limited because of the generally passive and politically divided nature of most regional military leaderships, the overall low level of lateral communication within and across military regions, and the general desire of military officers to remain out of party politics. On a more specific level, the restriction to the Beijing area of involvement by armed forces may also result from the likely predominant role played by Yang Baibing in any power seizure, as either supporter or target. Yang's power base is in the capital, as are many of his major apparent opponents.

Over time, however, situations could emerge that would serve to expand the conflict into several, if not all, military regions. Much would depend on the longevity of the conflict at the

center, the political stance of key regional leaderships, and a host of other variables influencing the ability of the newly established leadership in Beijing to consolidate power quickly and minimize social unrest. Conversely, it is also possible that limited civil-military intervention could provide the basis for the transition to a stable successor regime over the medium to long term. In this case, much would depend on the ultimate ability of party and military leaders to create new, broad-based political institutions capable of promoting more radical social and economic reform, and of absorbing growing social forces.

Of course, no scenario is inevitable. The precise configuration of forces influencing the pattern of interaction between the military and the successor leadership will be determined, to a great extent, by the sequence of deaths of China's elder leaders and the resulting political calculations that such deaths precipitate. Many unknown factors of importance play a role in this realm, largely involving the outlooks and associations of individual elders and subordinate leaders in formal positions of power within the central and regional party and military organs. In general, however, the likelihood of unstable patterns of military intervention will increase if Deng Xiaoping, Yang Shangkun, and likely military "moderates" such as Liu Huaqing and Zhang Aiping depart the political arena in advance of conservatives and hardliners such as Chen Yun, Peng Zhen, and Wang Zhen. Instability will also become more likely if Yang Baibing moves toward the hardliner camp and continues to increase his power base, and if various internal and external events serve to push apart the "natural alliance" between the Second Field Army and Third Field Army Factions.

In contrast, relative stability will probably result, at least over the short to medium term, if Deng Xiaoping and the leading hardliners die in rapid succession over the near term and Yang Shangkun survives as the dominant figure for several years thereafter. This assumes, however, that Yang will provide opportunities for the emergence of a more reform-oriented regime that includes the gradual reduction of political controls over the military and thus moves toward reducing the "gap" in political attitudes existing between younger officers in the PLA and those at the upper-middle levels. Even if hardliners such as Peng Zhen and Wang Zhen survived Deng's death, they might be encouraged, under such a scenario, to assert their positions more openly, thus allowing Yang to oppose them more credibly, and to eventually move toward greater reform. This, in turn, could lead to a resolution of conflict over the Tiananmen incident through a partial "reversal of verdicts" of the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP's) official characterization of it as a counterrevolutionary rebellion.

The greatest potential for short-term stability, however, will most likely result from the early passing of most party and military hardliners and the creation of a more uniform, reform-oriented successor party leadership less prone to internal splits through manipulation by the elders. Deng Xiaoping is apparently aiming at the establishment of such a leadership through the prospective replacement of Politburo Standing Committee (PBSC) members Li Peng, Yao Yilin, and Song Ping by reformers such as Zhu Rongji, Zou Jiahua, and Tian Jiyun at the upcoming 14th Party Congress. If Deng is successful, he may establish a basis for enduring, unified military support of a successor regime by a coalition of senior, pro-reform PLA leaders of the Second and Third FA systems, perhaps with the acquiescence of Yang Dezhi. (The elimination of Yang Baibing from the political equation, or, alternatively, his acceptance of a secondary role as a pro-reform military figure excluded from the highest levels of the party leadership, would probably constitute a key prerequisite for the emergence of such a unified military support structure.) Such a development would significantly lessen



pressures for any form of partisan military intervention in the succession process, and perhaps establish the foundation for an early transition to a pro-reform yet anti-liberal regime.

Even under such "ideal" conditions, however, the new Chinese leadership would still almost certainly be faced, over the medium or long term, with intensifying pressures for a broadening of political participation as a result of continued economic and social development, thus posing the prospect of a radical redefinition or rejection of communist party rule. Such pressures could easily lead to the emergence of serious splits within the successor regime and its pro-reform military supporters, as individual leaders came forward with differing solutions to growing leadership dilemmas.

Under such circumstances, the key to long-term stability will almost certainly lie again with the Chinese military, in this case most likely with a new generation of younger military leaders. These younger officers could serve as the guarantors of long-term stability for a nondemocratic Chinese regime marked by expanding economic regionalism and overall growth. Alternatively, they could also serve as the facilitators of radical social and economic change and political liberalization. Any realistic assessment of the relative likelihood of these or any other long-term scenarios will require far more detailed data on the political characteristics of China's emerging military leaders than are currently available.

#### **IMPLICATIONS OF THE 14TH PARTY CONGRESS**

The policy pronouncements and major changes in leading party and military personnel inaugurated by the 14th Party Congress of October 1992 clearly reaffirm the crucial importance of the PLA and military leadership factions in the political calculations of Deng Xiaoping and his associates. The congress's personnel changes in particular are an indication of the extent to which factional maneuvering within the PLA had escalated in recent years. Moreover, they confirm this Report's observation that the rising position of the Yangs had become the most immediate threat to the internal stability and unity of the PLA leadership, and hence to China's successful transition to a post-Deng setting. The unexpected removal of Yang Baibing from his military posts, which took place during and immediately after the congress, combined with the strengthening of the potential alliance between the pro-reform Second and Third FA Factions (with likely support from Yang Dezhi), has significantly increased the chances for a stable transition to a post-Deng regime. These changes have probably reduced the likelihood that, in a post-Deng setting, the new, pro-reform civilian party leadership will seek partisan military support in an attempt to consolidate their positions against real or imagined opponents at the top. They have also almost certainly lessened incentives for elements of the PLA to actively intervene in the succession process.

Certain major caveats to these somewhat optimistic conclusions should be kept in mind, however. The Yangs have not been eliminated from the political equation, and the danger thus remains that they will seek to reassert their influence after the death of Deng, especially if Yang Shangkun remains healthy and active. Perhaps more significant, the personnel changes formalized by the congress have not eliminated the PLA's destabilizing structural characteristics or the fundamental tension between the priorities of order versus development (both economic and political) in the calculations of the Chinese leadership and within Chinese society. Indeed, this tension could still become the major factor precipitating conflict within the Chinese military after the death of Deng Xiaoping, in the face of the intensifying

societal pressures discussed in this Report. In such circumstances, a debate over the handling of the Tiananmen crisis and its aftermath could still emerge within the leadership, and could thus serve as a catalyst for social action and large-scale military intervention in politics. Moreover, the likelihood of such instabilities could increase over the short term if Deng were to die before both Yang Shangkun and Chen Yun. This could lead to significant, destabilizing changes in the successor leadership. In other words, many of the threats to a stable, enduring successor regime discussed in this Report still hold true, particularly over the medium and long term. Regardless of the outcome, however, the key to China's political future will continue to rest in large part with the PLA.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>See Chapter 12 for further details on the implications of the 14th Party Congress for the succession.



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cussing highly sensitive issues with a foreigner. Their behavior is a testimony to the strength of feelings in favor of greater openness and reform that exists within certain strata of the PLA. Although the data provided by such informants may not be entirely accurate in every instance, I am convinced that they were conveyed in total sincerity, and I am grateful for the unique glimpse they offer into the workings of an institution that remains shrouded in secrecy and subject to distortion and rumor. These interview sources are not identified in this Report, for obvious reasons.

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## **GLOSSARY**

AMS	Academy of Military Sciences
BISS	Beijing Institute of International Strategic Studies
CAC	Central Advisory Commission
CASS	Chinese Academy of Social Sciences
C/C HQ	Command and Control Headquarters
CCP	Chinese Communist Party
CCP CC	Chinese Communist Party Central Committee
CDR	Commander
CGU	Central Guard Unit
CMC	Central Military Commission
COSTIND	Commission on Science, Technology and Industry for National Defense
CPPCC	Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference
CPV	Chinese People's Volunteers
CPVA	Chinese People's Volunteer Army
CYL	Communist Youth League
DIC	Discipline Inspection Commission
DID	Discipline Inspection Department
DPC	Deputy Political Commissar
ETO	Economic and Trade Office
FA	Field Army
FPC	First Political Commissar
GA	Group Army
GLD	General Logistics Department
GPCR	Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution
GPD	General Political Department
GSD	General Staff Department (Headquarters of the General Staff)
MD	Military District
MLH	Martial Law Headquarters
MR	Military Region

MSD	Military Subdistrict
MSL	Military Service Law
NDIO	National Defense Industries Office
NDU	National Defense University
NPC	National People's Congress
PAFC	People's Armed Forces Committees
PAFD	People's Armed Forces Departments
PAP	People's Armed Police
PAP GU	People's Armed Police General Unit
PAP GHQ	People's Armed Police General Headquarters
PB	Politburo
PBSC	Politburo Standing Committee
PC	Political Commissar
PLA	People's Liberation Army
PLAAF	People's Liberation Army Air Force
PLAN	People's Liberation Army Navy
PLANAF	People's Liberation Army Naval Air Force
PRC	People's Republic of China
R&D	Research and Development
RRU	Ready Reserve Units
SEZ	Special Economic Zone
SPCSC	State Physical Culture and Sports Commission

**PART ONE**  
**INTRODUCTION**



## INTRODUCTION

Throughout Chinese history, armed force has played a pivotal role in both the establishment and maintenance of political authority. Whether wielded by aristocratic scholar gentries of the ruling class, impoverished peasant rebels, or foreign invaders from beyond the Great Wall, forces of armed men in large part determined the rise and fall of China's imperial dynasties. Moreover, during most dynastic reigns, the notion of bureaucratic rule through a select elite of scholar officials steeped in a Confucian moral and ethical doctrine that denigrated the soldier usually concealed a pattern of power politics founded upon a keen appreciation of personal control over armed forces. Chinese emperors employed a wide variety of measures to assure the loyalty or passivity of their militaries, including purges of officers, forced retirements, the partitioning and isolation of military forces, and the periodic reshuffling of regional military leaders. Variants of many of these measures are still in use today.

The collapse of this traditional system of rule in 1911 did not eliminate the principle of armed force as the key foundation of political power in China; rather, it strengthened it. The 1911 Revolution that toppled the Qing Dynasty was largely led by disparate groups of proto-Nationalist military officers often allied with strong regional leaders formerly obedient to the Chinese Emperor. Once the central government had collapsed, conflicts among these local military elites and their political associates led directly to a period of warlordism. During this time the personalized, military character of power in China achieved its purest expression. For nearly two decades, during the twenties and thirties, regional armies fought and maneuvered against one another from autonomous territorial bases, each united largely on the basis of personal ties between officers and men, rather than through allegiance to abstract political principles or professional concepts of military discipline and institutionalized authority.

This anarchic pattern of military "rule" was overcome only by the emergence of yet another, more potent version of Chinese military power: the party-army. This new apparatus for power seizure resulted from the application of Leninist patterns of elitist political organization and indoctrination to the Chinese peasant army, rather than to discontented (and often disorganized) urban social classes, as had occurred in Russia during the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917. Initially adopted by the Nationalists under Sun Yat-sen and Chiang Kai-shek during a short-lived period of collaboration with the Soviet Union in the mid-twenties, the party-army structure was later developed to its highest form by the communists under Mao Zedong, who strengthened its elements of party leadership and doctrinal authority while also adopting and modifying traditional Chinese strategies of rural-based guerrilla warfare.

Many of the highly personalized aspects of traditional authority relations remained in place under this new politico-military structure. Nevertheless, it eventually transformed the Chinese military into a highly disciplined, indoctrinated political instrument serving the interests of a group of dedicated revolutionaries, most of whom held high posts as both party members and military leaders. Under their rule, the Chinese Workers' and Peasants' Red Army (later renamed the People's Liberation Army, or PLA) not only provided the key to the victory of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in 1949 but, more important, established the

basic "militarized" character of political power in China that has distinguished Chinese communist rule ever since.<sup>1</sup>

Despite more than forty years of supposed civilian party control and extensive functional specialization of elites, the Chinese military has remained the ultimate foundation for and arbiter of power among contending factions at the top of the communist system. Military leaders and, in some cases, armed units of the PLA, have been implicated in every major Chinese leadership crisis since 1949, including the Gao Gang and Rao Shushi affair of the early fifties, the dispute between Defense Minister Peng Dehuai and CCP Chairman Mao Zedong in 1959, the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (GPCR) of 1966–76, Lin Biao's abortive power play of 1971, the overthrow of the Gang of Four in late 1976, the ousting of Hu Yaobang in 1987, and the removal of Zhao Ziyang during the Tiananmen crisis of 1989. The PLA played a particularly decisive role during the transition period between the death of Mao in 1976 and the rise to power of Deng Xiaoping in 1978–79, in large part through the efforts of Ye Jianying, the most powerful military leader of that period.

Today, the post-Tiananmen communist regime is confronted by an unprecedented, highly unstable domestic environment, marked by widespread social discontent and extremely low party prestige, growing economic and political regionalism, a weak, divided, and unpopular leadership, and the imminent passing of the original revolutionary generation of elder Chinese powerholders. Several alternative future scenarios for China are possible, including a prolonged period of internal conflict, revived authoritarian central control, the virtual breakup of the PRC into semiautonomous regions under nominal central rule, or the successful transition to a more open, modernizing noncommunist system. Regardless of the outcome, however, China's internal crisis, when combined with the historical centrality of Chinese military power and the legacy of factionalized party-army rule, suggest that the People's Liberation Army will again serve as the key variable influencing power relationships at the top of the Chinese political system. Indeed, one cannot hope to understand the dynamics of China's coming succession struggle and China's future political evolution without analyzing the role of the PLA in elite politics.

This Report does not claim to provide a definitive exposition of this topic. Rather, it constitutes an essential first step. Using data derived from several different sources, including new biographical information on Chinese military leaders, reliable journalistic sources, and extensive interviews with very knowledgeable Chinese (including both former and current members of the PLA), the Report systematically examines three major components of China's politico-military system: (1) party-military leadership, (2) military organizations, and (3) military beliefs and attitudes toward political involvement. The intent is not to predict what

<sup>1</sup>For a useful synopsis of the distinguishing characteristics of China's politico-military system, see Amos Perlmutter and William M. LeoGrande, "The Party in Uniform: Toward a Theory of Civil-Military Relations in Communist Political Systems," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 76, December 1982, pp. 778–789. The authors contrast the highly "symbiotic" nature of civil-military relations in China, characterized by low differentiation between military and nonmilitary elites, and a mixing of elites between military and nonmilitary posts, with the military in Soviet Russia, which did not become the arbiter of communist politics. Instead, the army, "... converted by Lenin and Trotsky early in its evolution, followed the pattern of the classical European professional standing army" (p. 785). Also see David Shambaugh, "The Soldier and the State in China: The Political Work System in the People's Liberation Army," *China Quarterly*, No. 127, September 1991, pp. 530–568. Shambaugh argues that the unique history of China's party-army and the specific political control mechanisms utilized within the PLA mean that "... the soldier and the state in China have a generically different relationship from western, or even other communist, militaries" (p. 567).

the PLA will do in a future leadership crisis in China, but to more clearly delineate the major features of the system most relevant to military involvement in elite politics, gain a better understanding of the variables influencing such involvement and the range and manner of their interaction, and thus provide a basis for evaluating the general likelihood of different scenarios of possible military intervention in a future succession struggle.<sup>2</sup> The study will thus serve as a useful basis for understanding the potential for the emergence of deep-seated conflict and instability in China during the course of the succession to the Deng Xiaoping era, and also, it is hoped, prompt further, more complete examinations of the political role of the Chinese military.

This Report argues that political authority in China remains highly personalized, militarized, and contentious. In this system, a party leader's ultimate power relies to a great extent upon the strength and breadth of his personal links to the military, whereas a military leader's ultimate political leverage usually derives from his personal relationships with key party leaders. The resulting personalistic pattern of authority relationships, combined with the absence of an institutionalized structure of leadership succession, inevitably generate a complex and often unstable dynamic of intense factional competition at the apex of the Chinese politico-military system. Such a system creates strong incentives for a single leader or small group of leaders to establish dominant authority by maintaining and expanding a personal factional support network throughout the organs of rule, especially the military. In the past, this system produced a highly interactive pattern of party and military politics in which individual military leaders and armed units were drawn into leadership conflict on a partisan basis, in support of specific mainstream party leaders.

A second major feature of the overall system derived from the above is the high concentration of power in the hands of a few very senior figures. Ultimate power in China today is still exercised by a small number of senior revolutionary veterans with broad experience as both military and party leaders. The relative political influence of these contending elders derives from their comparative prestige and stature as the "founding fathers" of the revolution, and their relative positions as patrons of complex, vertically structured factional networks extending down through and often across the party, military, and government bureaucracies. As a result, the most powerful central and regional leaders below the elders rely heavily upon the strength of their links to specific party and military patriarchs to get ahead in the system. These leaders are also supported from below by their own personal factional networks.

Those factional support networks of greatest significance to a future leadership crisis are concentrated in the military bureaucracy, connecting both party and military elders with younger, powerful central and regional military elites. The key organizational structure that provides the framework for such personal linkages is the extended PLA field army (FA) system, described in Chapter 2 and illustrated in Appendix D. This system includes not only the huge field armies of the Chinese Civil War of 1947–50, but also both the earlier units out of which they were formed and those later infantry corps that survived after the early fifties to constitute the basis of today's 24 group armies, thus providing a direct organizational link between the existing PLA and the original armed units of the revolutionary period. Underlying this approach is the assumption that, among China's highly factionalized, party-army

<sup>2</sup>See Appendix A for a discussion of the analytic limitations presented by available data and the manner in which such data were used in this Report.



elite, common service within components of such a military system and shared experiences in protracted combat situations forged primary bonds of trust among elders and senior leaders that could be activated in an ultimate political crisis, such as a post-Deng Xiaoping succession struggle.

This Report analyzes in considerable detail the FA careers of nearly 200 elders and high-level military and party leaders and also provides additional information on their activities and personal interactions outside the confines of the FA system.<sup>3</sup> This analysis suggests the existence of five distinct, albeit latent, leadership factions, each led by one or more senior party-army elders and in most instances supported by a cohort of central and regional military officers. Not every faction is defined on the basis of its affiliation to a specific FA system. However, the existence or absence of FA-based ties is used to evaluate each faction's strengths and weaknesses as a political actor in a future succession struggle.

Three factions are headed by career military elders, many formally "retired" from PLA leadership posts, and are identified largely (although not solely) through association with a specific FA system. One such PLA elder faction is led by four of Deng Xiaoping's closest surviving colleagues from the Second Field Army. This faction currently enjoys a dominant position within the regime, not only because of its ties to Deng, but also because of its strong internal unity, its links to various central military departments such as the General Logistics Department (GLD), the PLA Navy (PLAN), the Commission on Science, Technology and Industry for National Defense (COSTIND), and the Second Artillery (strategic missile corps), and its relatively strong ties to the high-level leadership of several key military regions, including the Beijing and especially the Nanjing Military Regions (MRs).<sup>4</sup> Perhaps most important, this faction also dominates the leadership of the supreme policymaking organ of the PLA, the Party Central Military Commission (CMC). On the negative side, the faction displays some notable weaknesses. It enjoys a disproportionate level of influence over the PLA, which probably creates resentment among nonaffiliated PLA elders. It also has few FA-based followers among key PLA central departments such as the General Political Department (GPD), relies excessively for regional support upon ties established between various non-Second FA MR leaders and individual Second FA elders, and has few links to senior "civilian" party leaders below Deng, with the exception of his designated successor, Party General Secretary Jiang Zemin.

A second PLA elder faction is led by a veteran commander of the Third Field Army system, which contains the largest number of former associates among the surviving elders. It is highly influential within the military, although not significantly represented within high-level party organs. Its importance derives largely from the high regard in which its members are held by professional PLA commanders and its very strong ties to COSTIND and the overall defense industry and military science and technology sectors, as well as its presence within the PLA Air Force (PLAAF) and PLAN, and the Academy of Military Sciences (AMS) in Beijing, an important institute that provides advice and operational support to the PLA leadership. Perhaps most important, this faction enjoys strong connections to the General Staff Department (GSD), the administrative headquarters of the PLA and the organ charged

<sup>3</sup>For example, associations formed through common extended services in military region commands and various central PLA organs are also examined.

<sup>4</sup>For a map showing the location of these military regions, see Appendix I.

with translating and implementing policies and orders issued by the CMC. Despite such strengths, many of the large number of former Third FA veterans holding important posts in Beijing are associated with other factions (thus illustrating the limits of the FA system approach in delineating potential political alliances), and the presence of this faction in China's military regions is also relatively weak.

The third PLA elder faction is led by a widely revered professional military commander of the Fifth (North China) Field Army system. It has possible links with the CMC and GSD, through past service in both organs by its leader, and is also likely connected to at least one prominent, albeit retired, "civilian" party elder. The faction is characterized by some very significant weaknesses, however. Its leader is regarded as politically unskilled and a peripheral player in elite maneuvering at the top of the system. Moreover, very few former affiliates of the Fifth FA system remain in the central military or party leadership, and its few possible regional supporters are more clearly identified with other factions. As a result, this faction probably enjoys little independent power compared to the other two PLA elder factions, despite the high status of its leader, and will thus probably serve only as a secondary player in any future succession struggle.

The two remaining elder-led factions are headed by senior party leaders, not career military officers, although one enjoys close links to a relatively narrow, albeit powerful, segment of the PLA. Neither faction is identified with a specific FA system, which could greatly limit their ultimate political strength. The stronger faction of the two is led by Deng Xiaoping's second-in-command within the party and state apparatus, PRC President and CMC First Vice Chairman Yang Shangkun. Beyond the obvious advantages gained from an alliance with Deng, this faction also benefits from long-term links with very powerful central party organs (especially the CCP General Office, the CMC, and, to a lesser extent, the Party Secretariat), as well as the expanding power base created by Yang's younger half-brother and factional associate, PLA General Yang Baibing. This has led to links with the powerful GPD, limited contacts with the GLD and the Second Artillery, and, perhaps most important, strong support within the Beijing MR and the Beijing People's Armed Police (PAP) Headquarters. The latter two organizations provide the faction with armed backing in the capital, which could prove decisive in a succession struggle. This faction also suffers from some major deficiencies, however, including very few obvious supporters among the regional leadership outside the Beijing MR and few professional links to combat units in the field. In addition, the faction suffers from its very close association with the Tiananmen crackdown and the more recent repoliticization of the military, as well as a lack of strong ties to both the GSD and the defense industry establishment. In fact, it may be held in considerable contempt by both junior and senior PLA officers associated with modernization and reform.

The second major party elder-led faction consists of a loose affiliation of conservative, formally "retired" leaders with few clear ties to any segment of the military.<sup>5</sup> Although arguably the most important force within the existing top party leadership outside of the Deng-Yang alliance, it is perhaps the weakest grouping when viewed from a medium- or long-term perspective. Its political strengths derive largely from the high stature and personal contacts of its uppermost leaders (resulting from their long tenure as senior party and government

<sup>5</sup>Given the looseness of its internal composition, this "faction" is usually referred to as a "grouping" in the main text of the Report.

cadres) and the support it receives from both conservatives and ideological hardliners within the party and the military. It enjoys considerable influence within the economic planning apparatus and the propaganda sector, and it provides crucial support to conservative members of the current Politburo Standing Committee (PBSC) such as Premier Li Peng, the most significant challenger to Jiang Zemin in the successor leadership. This grouping is severely limited by its tenuous links to the military, however, presenting a major contrast with the strong PLA ties enjoyed by the Deng-Yang alliance. It also suffers, along with the Yang Shangkun Faction, from its close connection to the Tiananmen crackdown.

In addition to these five basic political factions, two other senior PLA elders are identified as potential key players or "wild cards" in a future succession struggle: Wang Zhen and Li Desheng. Although both are former long-term military figures, neither exerts much influence on the basis of association with a strong FA system. Moreover, both are often reported to be in poor health. Yet their support could prove to be very important in a future succession struggle. Wang was a staunch advocate of using military force during the Tiananmen crisis and has ties to an important, albeit remote, military region, while Li has exerted very strong influence over one of China's most powerful military regions.

The above major leadership entities in the Chinese politico-military system are not divided by sharp, fundamental policy differences. In fact, during the sixties and seventies, their leading figures shared a common revulsion against the Maoist excesses of the Cultural Revolution period. Indeed, many were purged or placed in political limbo after undergoing criticism by radicals during that tumultuous era. Equally important, most of these party and military leaders were subsequently rehabilitated through the efforts of Deng Xiaoping and supported his efforts during the late seventies and eighties to eliminate the last vestiges of radicalism and develop more pragmatic policies offering the prospect of increased living standards and a more modern military establishment. In other words, they are all mainstream Leninists, not wild-eyed utopians.

Moreover, this Report demonstrates that, beyond these general historical and philosophical associations, strong organizational and career service linkages also exist between the two most important PLA elder factions, primarily in areas related to the defense industry and military science and technology. Such an alliance, if augmented by support from the remaining PLA "professional commander" faction associated with the Fifth FA system, could serve as a crucial force for stability in a future succession struggle. It could also serve, over the longer term, as the basis for a stable, post-Deng regime dedicated to more far-reaching economic reform.

A potential political alliance also exists between the two major party elder factions or groupings, because of their common, close association with and support for the Tiananmen crackdown, and the fact that they currently wield comparatively greater direct political influence within the party leadership than their elder colleagues within the PLA. Within such an environment, these two factions may fear that an open split between them might precipitate widespread social disorder and large-scale, direct military intervention in politics. This could serve to dislodge them from the political arena, since neither party elder faction enjoys strong, broadly based links to leading PLA elders and the regional military outside Beijing.

Such factors suggest that factional relationships within the politico-military system in China could, under certain conditions, produce a stabilizing pattern of PLA involvement in the suc-

cession process, or provide a basis for noninvolvement by the military. However, additional features of China's politico-military system serve to reduce the likelihood that such optimistic scenarios will emerge, suggesting that the factional dynamics of the PRC leadership could instead lead to major schisms and destabilizing military intervention. First, considerable indications exist of ongoing rivalry between the most prominent remaining party elders. This can be seen in the political maneuvering that takes place over reform policy and the selection of new party leaders. Indeed, the two leading contenders for the succession at present (Jiang Zemin and Li Peng) each depend upon support from different elders, as suggested above. On the military side, there is evidence that the ambition and strength of the Yang Shangkun Faction has apparently aroused the anger and resentment of significant elements of the senior PLA leadership, perhaps including members of Deng's Second FA Faction. The danger of this situation is compounded by the fact that both factions are well represented among the heads of armed units in Beijing. Finally, on a broader policy level, a basis for conflict exists between the two above-mentioned potential military and party alliances over the relative importance to be placed upon continued reform versus order and rigid party control in future policy.

A second destabilizing feature of the current leadership structure relates directly to the qualities of the younger successor generation of party leaders. The narrow, essentially civilian and often technical backgrounds of these figures stand in sharp contrast to the broad-based, party-army experiences of China's elder leaders. Few enjoy either professional or personal ties to career PLA officers. Moreover, few potential successors appear to possess the political contacts, administrative capabilities, vision, and overall prestige to lead a credible, enduring post-elder regime. Such weaknesses could lead these individuals to appeal to groups within the military for crucial support during an escalating succession struggle, perhaps by playing upon the kinds of potential divisions among the PLA factions mentioned above.

Third, the potential for destabilizing military involvement in the succession process is increased by certain basic organizational features of the PLA. These features directly influence the capacity and susceptibility of various types of armed units to become involved in factional leadership strife. The most potentially destabilizing organizational feature discussed in this Report is China's system of military command and control and party supervision. This system is shown to embody most of the basic characteristics of the politico-military system as a whole: It is highly personalized, centralized along vertical lines, and compartmentalized. As a result, it presents major irregularities in procedure and potential ambiguities in authority relationships that could prove highly destabilizing in the event of a future leadership crisis at the center, especially one involving the breakdown of elder control and the emergence of open splits among the successor leadership.

But could the PLA actually split along broad geographical lines in a crisis, thus raising the prospect of a resurgence of warlordism? The basic organizational and leadership characteristics of the regional military argue against such a possibility. Common geographic origin no longer serves as a primary basis for intra- or interunit links among officers and soldiers in the Chinese military, as it did during the warlord period of the twenties and thirties. Instead, those characteristics of the regional military structure most relevant to political involvement present a complex picture of middle- and low-level unit-based identification, limited lateral communication, and, in most (although not all) cases, leadership fragmentation

at the upper levels, largely through the repeated intermingling by Beijing of high-level officers with differing career backgrounds. The resulting pattern of vertical compartmentalization and high-level leadership diversity among most military regions is compounded by the virtual absence of significant links between regional and local military leaders and their civilian party and government counterparts. Finally, central control over the regional PLA is normally assured by an internal structure of intensive political surveillance over PLA field units and their officers that operates through the activities of the party political work system.

In all, such structures suggest that major combat units within military regions in China exist largely as cohesive yet politically passive entities. Hence, the least likely type of military action in a crisis would involve independent coordination of unit behavior, i.e., a planned military "mutiny" in opposition to central or high-level regional leadership. This does not mean, however, that main force PLA combat units could not become involved in a future leadership crisis. Some military regions have retained a very high level of internal cohesiveness in leadership personnel from top to bottom, while others exhibit potential factional links to military and party leaders at the center (the most important such linkage occurs in the Beijing MR, as indicated above). Moreover, the high level of personnel continuity within Chinese group armies and the close relationship between middle- and low-level officers and rank-and-file soldiers in general suggest that the total collapse of central control and a resulting paralysis of the regional military leadership could precipitate sporadic, independent actions by regional units (and perhaps by many PAP, reserve, and militia forces, which exhibit close ties with local party and government elites in most areas). It is therefore a definite exaggeration to argue that the regional PLA today exists largely as a pliant tool of whichever leader is issuing orders in Beijing. This Report indicates that regional military leaders may not always respond, as military professionals, to orders from the top.

Finally, the high potential for disruptive PLA intervention in succession politics is perhaps most clearly indicated by the attitudes and beliefs held by PLA officers toward the issue of party control and the political role of the military. Intense confusion and much resentment, anger, and suspicion exist within the ranks of the PLA officer corps over such issues as the legitimacy of continued communist party rule, the reemphasis on politicization in military policy, and the leadership's demand for the PLA to play a greater role in handling future domestic social and political unrest. In general, such criticism and resentment tends to be concentrated among younger PLA officers, especially those holding subordinate staff positions in regional command headquarters located in China's coastal areas and in the PLA central departments and offices in Beijing. In some cases, it is combined with support for progressive beliefs such as the concept of a National Army free from party control.

Balancing these potentially disruptive beliefs and attitudes, however, are forces for stability deriving from the military's traditional fear of chaos and the heightened awareness of the PLA's importance as the final guarantor of social order. These views are apparently held by a wide range of officers at all levels of the military hierarchy, although they are especially concentrated among the most powerful PLA leaders. Such notions generally serve to reinforce this group's support for the party as China's only viable political institution, and also to justify its continued involvement in the political intrigues of the elder factions.

Between these two extremes lies a very large middle ground of patriotic officers. This "silent majority" is apparently strongly committed to continued military and economic moderniza-

tion, uncertain about the future of one-party rule, perhaps critical of Tiananmen, and to varying degrees supportive of renewed ties with the West.

Such varying beliefs and attitudes among the PLA officer corps will be far more important in determining the future pattern of military involvement in the succession process than any differences stemming from the contrasting functional responsibilities of commanders and commissars, and may ultimately rival or exceed the influence over officer behavior exerted by personal factional loyalties in general. In an escalating succession struggle, it is highly likely that such military beliefs and views will be used as political weapons by contending leadership factions, to mobilize support and oppose or isolate opponents. Elite references to the Tiananmen crackdown in particular may serve as the central symbol for factional overtures to the military, given the relationship of that event to all the major issues mentioned above. Yet such manipulation of military views could ultimately unleash enormous pressures from below that could bring into play more fully the destabilizing organizational features of the system, thus bringing about disruptive military intervention.

Overall, the above basic features of China's politico-military system suggest that the Chinese military will almost certainly play the decisive role in the transition to a post-Deng Xiaoping regime. In general, this Report concludes that various forms of unified, overt intervention by the PLA will be less likely than various types of factional intervention. However, the process promises to be highly dynamic (perhaps with some scenarios following others in sequence), and the exact nature of the PLA's role will depend upon a variety of factors, especially the order of departure and related political calculations of China's elder leaders, given their extreme importance to the structure of power. The interaction of these factors and various scenarios of PLA involvement in the succession are discussed in some detail in the concluding chapter.

The remainder of this Report is divided into four parts. The first three include analysis of the leadership, organizational, and attitudinal features of the Chinese military relevant to its involvement in elite politics. The final part presents a summary and conclusion. This is followed by several appendixes. The leadership part contains five chapters. Chapter 1 addresses the role of personalized authority relationships and seniority in Chinese politics. Chapter 2 discusses the organizational foundations of leadership factions in the Chinese military, centered upon the field army system. Chapters 3, 4, and 5 employ the framework presented in Chapter 2 to delineate latent factional associations among the remaining members of China's original revolutionary generation, the central party and military leadership, and the regional military leadership, respectively. The organization part of the Report contains two chapters analyzing institutional issues relevant to military involvement in elite politics. Chapter 6 discusses China's military command and control apparatus and its relation to the system of party supervision over the military. Chapter 7 analyzes the structure and behavior of the regional military, focusing on issues of mobility, lateral communication, and local civil-military relations. The beliefs part of the Report contains a single chapter (Chapter 8) on military attitudes toward political intervention and party control. Because of severe data limitations, this part is necessarily the most tentative in its conclusions.

The final part of the Report contains four chapters. Chapter 9 lists the salient features of the entire politico-military system relevant to political intervention by the PLA. Chapter 10 evaluates the general likelihood of several possible scenarios of military involvement, and Chapter 11 briefly discusses the likely impact that the timing and order of death of Deng

Xiaoping's party and military associates will have upon the evolution of party-military relations. Chapter 12 consists of a postscript analyzing the implications of the recent 14th Party Congress for the PLA's political role in the succession.

This Report also contains ten appendixes. Appendix A discusses the sources and methodology used in the analysis. Appendix B lists all party and military leaders discussed in the text, along with their titles and party posts just prior to the 14th Party Congress. Appendix C contains detailed biographical information on all leading regional military leaders. Appendix D consists of a chart detailing the evolution of the five field army systems. Appendixes E through H consist of four organizational diagrams showing (a) the major departments of the Chinese military relevant to elite politics, (b) the structure of military command and control for main force PLA units, (c) the structure of command and control for PAP, reserve, and militia forces, and (d) the party control system for main force PLA units. Appendix I presents a map of China's current military regions, showing the location of group army headquarters. Appendix J lists both the members of the party politburo and the PLA members of the party central committee elected by the 14th Party Congress.

**PART TWO**  
**THE LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE**





## **THE LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE**

Any examination of the potential role of the Chinese military in leadership politics must attempt to assess power relationships among the top political elite and between that elite and the upper ranks of the PLA. This part of the Report contains four chapters, each analyzing different components of China's party-military leadership. It argues that political authority in China remains highly personalized, militarized, and contentious, established through a complex and often unstable pattern of intense factional maneuvering at the apex of the politico-military system. Ultimate control of this system is exercised by a small number of senior revolutionary elders with broad experience as both party and military leaders. These men provide basic stability and order to the communist regime as a result of their enormous personal stature and their control over extensive factional support networks, although conflicts among them have repeatedly led to military involvement in elite politics. Those factional networks of greatest significance to a future succession struggle are concentrated in the military bureaucracy and derive largely (although not entirely) from common association with the extended PLA field army system. Analysis of such associations (combined with other very important links—for example, those based on joint service in China's military regions) suggests the existence of five distinct, albeit latent, elder-led party-army factions, most containing very powerful members of the central and regional PLA elite. Two "outsider" PLA elders are also identified as potential "wild cards" in the system. A major destabilizing feature of this factional structure derives from its extremely weak ties to the current succession party leadership. Mired in the struggle for power, few such leaders enjoy either professional or personal links to career PLA officers. Moreover, close examination of the likely factional associations of the regional military leadership reveals internal fissures and political characteristics that could prove to be destabilizing in a future succession struggle.

## 1. THE CENTRALITY OF PERSONAL FACTIONS AND THE HISTORICAL ROLE OF THE ELDERS

The concept of the communist party-army did not eliminate the highly personalistic aspect of political authority in China. Despite the emergence since 1949 of separate career paths within the party, state, and military apparatus, leaders at all but the lowest levels of the system continue to measure their influence and authority largely on the basis of highly personalized, informal ties, rather than on the basis of any formal positions of power. In most cases, the latter usually derive from the strength of the former.

These personal ties do not derive *primarily* from association with specific policy views or ideological leanings, nor from common geographical origins or professional interests. Such rigid patterns of alignment could become a source of weakness under certain circumstances. Instead, the prime basis for factions among both party and military cadres is "... the search for career security and the protection of power."<sup>1</sup> As Lucian Pye aptly states, the basic force that holds these networks together is founded upon:

the intense attraction of mutual dependency in Chinese culture between superiors and subordinates, each of whom needs the other for his own protection and each of whom is vulnerable to the other, which means that both must be loyal to each other. Thus, the strength of Chinese factions resides in the personal relationships of individuals who, operating in a hierarchical context, create linkage networks that extend upward in support of particular leaders who are, in turn, looking for followers to ensure their power.<sup>2</sup>

These special relationships are expressed through the fundamental concept of "*guanxi*" in Chinese society.<sup>3</sup> Large, complex *guanxi* networks of the type that support senior political leaders are often composed of amorphous cellular clusters of factions, linked to one another on the basis of a personal tie between the leader of each subordinate faction. They are therefore not monolithic, unified, and active structures, whose members are all aware of one another and directly linked to the uppermost leader. Rather, entire support networks or personal affiliations often exist in a latent state, with indeterminate memberships, and are sometimes activated only by an acute political crisis, such as the Cultural Revolution. Moreover, the factional components of these networks can at times shift their support from one high-level "patron" to another. Thus, it is not surprising that factional networks are sometimes constructed from the bottom up, as ill-defined groupings seeking to attach themselves to particular leaders.

It is little wonder that Chinese *guanxi* networks are virtually immune to destruction from above. Indeed, the practice of *guanxi* was able to overcome the principles of impersonal discipline underlying the Leninist party. It has thus far also triumphed over the unifying notion of professionalism within the military establishment.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Lucian Pye, *The Dynamics of Chinese Politics*, Cambridge: Oelgeschlager, Gunn & Hain, 1981, especially, p. 7.

<sup>2</sup>Pye, 1981, pp. 7-8.

<sup>3</sup>"*Guanxi*" literally means "relationship," but it is also used by Chinese to convey the specific notion of personal affiliation, influence, and mutual obligation described herein.

<sup>4</sup>The author is indebted to Lucian Pye for this observation, expressed in a private communication.

The most enduring personal *guanxi* networks are usually built upon a shared sense of mutual interest and trust, often established through prolonged and close proximity or common experience. Hence, institutional connections, as well as regional backgrounds, generational and blood ties, and doctrinal viewpoints do play important roles in the creation and evolution of *guanxi* networks. Organizational ties and common regional service are especially important in the Chinese military. Such affiliations provide the basis for the establishment of composite factions linking party and military elders with senior members of the formal PLA leadership at the center and throughout China's outlying regions.

However, these factors do not determine the ultimate purpose and scope of factional networks, which is to increase the power and security of both leader and led. In other words, such factors serve largely as supporting frameworks and connectors for factions, allowing them to expand in different directions within the politico-military system, often across formal party-military organizations.<sup>5</sup>

In both the party and the military bureaucracies, individuals make it to the top of the system by virtue of their proven capabilities in performing specific tasks within an organization and the usually greater influence exerted by both their downward factional support structures and their upward ties to factional patrons. For the military, the core of these networks consists of vertical tiers of personal associations between superiors and subordinates, often organized around an individual military region (MR) and subordinate group army (GA).<sup>6</sup> Individuals at the highest levels of the PLA will usually be moved more freely across different military structures, often holding positions in several military regions and within central military departments in Beijing during their careers.<sup>7</sup> The *guanxi* networks of such leading military officers will thus become highly complex, as they seek to place trusted associates in important positions among different leading military and party organs, and to sometimes even link up with other factions. Yet even for these individuals, their strongest base of support will in most cases remain with their unit of origin. Moreover, in many cases, the status and influence of a military leader will derive from the historical significance of that unit. A primary example of this is the famous 129th Division of the original Eighth Route Army, which produced many of China's elder leaders, including Deng Xiaoping.

Reliance on personalistic ties over institutional authority in the establishment and maintenance of power increases as a leader moves toward the top of the Chinese system. Moreover, at the very highest levels, the most powerful party leaders measure their influence largely on the basis of long-standing personal relationships to their counterparts in the PLA. Top military leaders, in turn, place primary emphasis on personal support networks that extend both internally, down and across various military organizations, and externally, to high-level "civilian" party patrons and colleagues.<sup>8</sup> By contrast, although the need to establish personal

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<sup>5</sup>It is surprising that the importance of personal *guanxi* networks to the power and authority held by Chinese leaders tends to be downplayed by some outside observers. It is so basic to the thinking of current and former Chinese participants in the party-army system that it hardly requires stating. The precise manner in which such networks interact under concrete circumstances is, of course, far less obvious. For a very useful discussion of the meaning and function of *guanxi* in Chinese authority relationships, see Pye, 1981, pp. 6-7, 138-142.

<sup>6</sup>See Appendix E, and the discussion of the organizational bases of factional association presented in Chapter 2.

<sup>7</sup>See Chapter 7 for more on this point.

<sup>8</sup>Throughout this Report, the term "party leaders" denotes those leaders whose formal posts are largely or solely within the party apparatus. The term "military leaders" denotes those party members whose formal posts are largely or solely within the military.

links between the party and military apparatus is also evident at lower leadership levels (reflected in the fact that all PLA officers are party members and that the party committee system within the military exercises great influence), individual leaders are more closely identified with the interests and perspectives of one or the other institution.

The highly personalized character of authority relationships, along with the absence of an institutionalized structure of leadership succession, together produce a complex and often unstable pattern of intense political competition at the apex of the Chinese politico-military system. Strong incentives exist for a single leader or small groups of leaders to establish their dominant authority by maintaining and expanding a personal support network within both party and military bureaucracies. Since subordinate leaders in the system base their political strategies on their evaluation of the shifting political struggle at the top of the system, they are constantly looking upward for indications of the relative strengths and weaknesses of specific leaders, and to obtain cues from patrons in need of support. Within this system, potential political successors therefore emerge largely as the creations of one or several contending senior leaders. Moreover, a successor's ultimate ability to survive the death of his patron(s) depends heavily upon the strength and breadth of his contacts among his military counterparts.

By far the most important individuals among the top leadership today are those members of the original revolutionary generation who forged the party-army structure and its strategy for attaining and maintaining power in China. These elders have attained enormous prestige and influence as a result of their revolutionary exploits and long careers in the party-army, during which time they developed a wide range of close, personal links to leaders throughout the party and military structures. Among such men, distinctions between party and military roles and the holding of a particular formal post hold relatively little meaning as indicators of power and influence. Personal relationships at this level are usually between individuals of similar backgrounds and experiences in leading a party-army structure, not between two distinct groups of elites, one party and the other military.

This does not necessarily mean, however, that all revolutionary elders alternated between party and military posts throughout their careers. In general, most political commissars from the pre-1949 period became "civilian" party *apparatchiki* after the seizure of power, whereas most military commanders continued to concentrate largely on military matters. It also does not mean that all elder party leaders enjoy equally close ties with their military counterparts. An individual such as Chen Yun, for example, served predominantly in various departments of the party central committee and in government posts in the finance sector during his career. As a result, his direct influence within military circles is certainly less than Deng Xiaoping, whose basic career was established as political commissar for the Second Field Army. Yet Chen's close contacts with party-military leaders such as Mao Zedong and his early, if brief, military experience as political commissar to various units before 1949, nevertheless indicate that he is personally familiar with senior military leaders and with military issues and enjoys a significant level of respect within the military.

As a result of their unique attributes and experiences, the party-military elders, rather than any specific institution, embody the "glue," through both extensive personal *guanxi* networks and their overall political status, that provides basic stability and order to the Chinese system. Hence, in a sense, when one speaks of "the authority of the party" in China, one really means the personal authority of the dominant elders and their supporters at the top of

the party structure. Moreover, among the elders, one individual usually becomes "first among equals," thus providing stability for the leadership group. During the forties, fifties, sixties, and early seventies, Mao Zedong obviously served this function. He was succeeded, after a few years of maneuvering, by Deng Xiaoping.

As one might expect, conflicts among the most senior of China's leaders have exerted an enormous influence over all aspects of military involvement in elite politics since 1949, repeatedly initiating, shaping, and constraining the pattern of PLA political participation on many occasions, albeit imperfectly. Indeed, the type of influence such leaders exert has often provided some coherence and unity to military involvement in elite struggles, while also serving personal political motives. For example, the PLA as an institution entered the intense internecine political struggles of the GPCR only in response to the orders of Mao Zedong, ostensibly to serve his parochial interests and to prevent the spread of social anarchy. Moreover, the confused, often conflictual pattern of PLA participation in the GPCR during much of 1967 and 1968 was at least partly linked to the contradictory orders issued by Mao and his more radical supporters to both support the "genuine" Left and maintain order. Indeed, local military leaders were often forced to shift back and forth between repression and restraint in response to alternating signals from Beijing. Finally, the PLA was ultimately given the opportunity to restore order and replace the party leadership by Mao's reluctant decision to bring the Red Guard rampages to a halt and begin the formation of revolutionary committees, apparently made only after some strong urgings by moderate party and military leaders. In short, despite enormous social and political upheaval, ultimate authority was maintained by Mao Zedong, whose actions and words provided the general framework for (sometimes highly disruptive) PLA actions.

The role of Deng Xiaoping and his elder colleagues was of equally crucial importance to PLA involvement during the Tiananmen crisis. Deng had labored during the height of the reform period in the eighties to reduce the influence of his aged colleagues over both party and military affairs, pressuring and persuading them to "retire" to largely advisory posts outside the formal decisionmaking organs while placing his anointed successors in top party and state positions. He did not, however, manage to exclude the more important party elders (e.g., Chen Yun, Peng Zhen, Wang Zhen) from "informal" participation in key party and military meetings, and he was also careful to maintain unambiguous personal control over the military by continuing to serve as chairman of the CMC. At the same time, he continued to exercise ultimate control over major decisions made by the formal party leadership, despite his official retirement from his top state and party posts.

Deng's plans for an eventual transfer of political power to younger leaders encountered an enormous setback when he was forced by conservative opposition in the party and military to allow one of his key successors, Hu Yaobang, to be removed as party general secretary in early 1987. This was followed by an increase in the political influence exerted by other elders, largely through younger conservative leaders such as Premier Li Peng. The subsequent, unprecedented student-led demonstrations of April-June 1989 (sparked by Hu's death) completed the reversal of Deng's efforts by providing the elders with the opportunity to fully reassert their prerogatives over the Chinese political system. The more conservative elders and their younger supporters used the Tiananmen demonstrations to force a confrontation between Deng and Hu's remaining successor, the reformist General Secretary Zhao Ziyang, over the handling of the crisis. Although information remains incomplete and

contradictory in some areas, the bulk of evidence suggests that the resulting leadership impasse produced real concern within the military and the party leadership as to where ultimate "party control" resided in Beijing. These concerns were overcome, however, through the combined assertion of the authority and personal prestige of Deng, Yang Shangkun, and other "retired" elders, who apparently agreed on the need to take firm, military action to quell the unrest. Once this was made clear, the military for the most part responded obediently.<sup>9</sup>

Deng certainly used his formal authority as head of the CMC to bring the military into the Tiananmen crisis, and command and control procedures developed for both external and internal crises were also apparently used to direct units throughout the incident. For example, the Martial Law Headquarters (MLH), in charge of military operations during Tiananmen, was established by order of the CMC, and included leading members of the PLA's command and control headquarters, as well as high-level officers of those MRs (usually deputy commanders and political commissars) that sent military units to Beijing.<sup>10</sup> Nevertheless, there is little question that the informal, personal authority of the elders was the key element providing the basis for orderly military intervention in April–June 1989. In fact, Deng and Yang Shangkun (perhaps with the assistance of Wang Zhen) may have initiated military involvement without the full support of the CMC.<sup>11</sup> Moreover, considerable evidence suggests that all subsequent key decisions governing military action were either made or approved by Deng and his elder colleagues, serving as a sort of "super cabinet" supervising the actions of the MLH. In this command structure, Yang Shangkun probably acted as the conduit between the formal party and military leadership, the CMC, and the elders.<sup>12</sup>

In effect, the PLA served during Tiananmen as an instrument of repression for the elders and their younger supporters within the party and army, to the apparent anger and frustration of other members of both institutions. Thus, despite many years of reforms intended, in part, to regularize and institutionalize the exercise of power in China, when an acute crisis emerged that threatened the position of the elders and potentially the very existence of the

<sup>9</sup>The relatively few instances of PLA disobedience will be discussed in subsequent chapters. There is considerable controversy within the analytic community over whether Deng Xiaoping traveled to a communications center near Wuhan during the early stages of the Tiananmen crisis to personally convince (or reassure) MR leaders that he was indeed in control of the situation in Beijing. Regardless of whether or not he made such a trip, there is little doubt that he needed to demonstrate to the military that he remained at the top of the leadership edifice and was supported by other key elders. This factor, we would argue, was the essential condition that assured smooth military compliance in the forcible suppression of pro-democracy demonstrators. For further discussion of the role of the elders in the Tiananmen crisis, see the concluding section of Chapter 6.

<sup>10</sup>The command and control structure of the PLA will be covered in some detail in Chapter 6.

<sup>11</sup>See Pollack, Jonathan D., "Structure and Process in the Chinese Military System," in Kenneth G. Lieberthal and David M. Lampton (eds.), *Bureaucracy, Politics, and Decision-Making in Post-Mao China*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1992, pp. 179–180. Michael Byrnes has argued that the most likely candidates for ordering the PLA to use force were Yang Shangkun and Wang Zhen, the only two remaining elders other than Deng with substantial military connections and experience. See his article, "The Death of a People's Army," in George Hicks, ed., *The Broken Mirror: China After Tiananmen*, Chicago: St. James Press, 1990, p. 142. Details on these two elders are provided in Chapter 3.

<sup>12</sup>See Yang Shangkun, "To Yield Would Mean Our End" (Abridged version of a speech delivered to an emergency enlarged meeting of the CMC in Beijing on May 24, 1989), translated in *Foreign Broadcast Information Service, China Daily Report (FBIS-CHI)*, June 16, 1989, pp. 9–11; and Tai Ming Cheung, "The PLA and Its Role Between April–June 1989," in Richard H. Yang, ed., *China's Military: The PLA in 1990/1991*, Kaohsiung: Tai-ping Printing, 1991, p. 6.

communist regime, the system revealed how little had actually changed.<sup>13</sup> In fact, by invoking the personal authority of the gerontocracy rather than relying entirely on more formal procedures strengthened under the reforms, the Tiananmen crisis served to accentuate the general importance of informal associations within both the party and the military.<sup>14</sup>

Deng Xiaoping has retained his status as "first among equals" within China's gerontocracy, despite being forced by the Tiananmen crisis to allow many of his elder colleagues to play a more direct role in political leadership.<sup>15</sup> Few analysts doubt that as long as Deng remains reasonably capable of making decisions, the Chinese political system will remain stable and the PLA under firm party control. His prestige within the upper echelons of the party and military is simply too great, and his political skill and *guanxi* network too formidable to provide the opportunity for a serious succession crisis to erupt while he remains in power.

Yet Deng is by no means universally supported by his elder colleagues, nor by all leaders of the successor generation. Indeed, those individuals outside of Deng's immediate network may strongly resent the privileged positions attained by many of his supporters, including the many military officers from the Second Field Army who attained very high positions of power in the late eighties (see Chapter 3). There may also be considerable contention within his support network. For example, Qin Jiwei has been described as a long-time adversary of Yang Shangkun.<sup>16</sup> However, such potential rifts are held in check by Deng's over-arching prestige, personal connections, and political skill. In this sense, he serves as the linchpin in the edifice of China's power structure, balancing and connecting a wide range of factional networks, while at the same time serving as the leader of one faction.<sup>17</sup>

This fact, plus the key historical role played by many elders in previous cases of PLA involvement in leadership struggles, suggest that the order and manner in which the remaining top members of China's revolutionary generation pass from the political arena will decisively influence the nature and scope of any future pattern of military involvement in the succession struggle. This, in turn, points to the importance of analyzing the relationships among the most powerful elders, and the links between such senior leaders and top PLA officers at the center and in China's military regions.

<sup>13</sup>The continued importance of personal networks to authority structures within the PLA was clearly suggested by the types of personnel and organizational reforms that Deng Xiaoping implemented in the mid-eighties. The decision to reduce substantially the size of the officer corps and decrease the number of MRs from 11 to 7 was intended, in part, to accelerate the removal of influential, senior officers who had heretofore been able to resist retirement. A highly institutionalized military system would not have encountered such serious problems, but China's aged military elite could rely on their personal authority and support networks to successfully resist all but the most drastic changes. See Pollack, 1992.

<sup>14</sup>We should add that during the more common cases in People's Republic of China (PRC) history of less widespread PLA involvement in elite political struggles, elder party leaders, in collaboration with their military colleagues, still provided the impetus for PLA intervention. For example, it was Mao Zedong who provided the opportunity for Lin Biao and the propaganda arm of the PLA to enter the emerging elite struggle of 1963/64 with the "Learn from the PLA" campaign. During the transition to the post-Mao era, it was Deng Xiaoping who cooperated with Ye Jianying to ensure military support for the removal of Hua Guofeng.

<sup>15</sup>For a discerning discussion of Deng's relationship with his elder "rivals," see Ian Wilson and You Ji, "Leadership by 'Lines': China's Unresolved Succession," *Problems of Communism*, January-February 1990, Washington, D.C., pp. 33-34.

<sup>16</sup>Byrnes, 1990, p. 139.

<sup>17</sup>A discussion of Deng's attempts to balance the current post-Tiananmen party leadership while promoting his economic reform program is presented in Chapter 4.



## 2. THE FOUNDATIONS OF FACTIONAL AFFILIATION IN THE PLA: FIELD ARMIES, CORPS, AND MILITARY REGIONS

The violent origins of China's party-army elite and the continued importance of personalized lines of authority in determining power relationships suggest that the bonds of comradeship forged during both the communists' protracted struggle for power and subsequent conflicts such as the Korean War will likely remain a primary basis for factional affiliation in a future succession struggle. In such a highly charged environment, the personal trust established during such periods of armed conflict will almost certainly take precedence over all other types of intraelite associations. The analysis of China's top party and military leaders presented in Chapters 3–5 thus seeks to identify possible personal affiliations formed to a significant degree (although not entirely) through common service within the most basic component of military organization of the party-army apparatus before and after 1949: the field army (*yezhanjun*).

These huge military structures originally developed along geographical or regional lines, as explained below. This fact led William Whitson to argue, in his pathbreaking work on PLA factions, *The Chinese High Command*,<sup>1</sup> that field armies served as the foundations for a geographically based pattern of factional affiliations within the overall structure of communist power. Such a framework is now essentially obsolete, as we shall demonstrate more fully in Chapters 5 and 7. Nevertheless, the personal relationships that evolved out of affiliations with various field armies and their areas of operation are still evident in the backgrounds of China's leading party and military rulers, while younger PLA leaders still establish their careers through association with units that evolved directly from the original field armies. Hence, it is important to understand exactly how the field army system has evolved before we can proceed to analyze possible leadership relationships.

Five field armies were established in the late forties by combining various forces associated with related military base areas, as well as more independent divisions, brigades, etc. Together, these forces became the basis of the newly designated People's Liberation Army, formerly the Chinese Workers' and Peasants' Red Army. Each field army was originally given a regional designation reflecting its major area of operation from the latter stages of the Anti-Japanese War until the outset of open hostilities between the communists and the nationalists in 1947. Numerical designations were then adopted in early 1949, after the field armies had left these areas of operation to engage the Nationalists in campaigns across China:<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>William W. Whitson, *The Chinese High Command: A History of Communist Military Politics, 1927–1971*, New York: Praeger Publishers, 1973.

<sup>2</sup>Between April and December 1949 the First Field Army conquered Northwest China, the Second Field Army captured Wuhan in Central China and then defeated the Nationalists in the Southwest, the Third Field Army took Shanghai and East China, and the Fourth Field Army swept south through Hunan and Guangdong, capturing Guangzhou in October 1949 and Hainan Island in May 1950. Part of the Fifth Field Army served as garrison forces in the Beijing-Tianjin area, while other units were detached to assist the First Field Army in the northwest and the Second Field Army in the south.

- The Northwestern Field Army under the command of Peng Dehuai with He Long and Xi Zhongxun as political commissars, which originally operated in Shanxi, Shaanxi, and Ningxia. It was renamed the First Field Army.
- The Central Plains Field Army under the command of Liu Bocheng with Deng Xiaoping as political commissar, which originally operated in Henan, Hubei, and Anhui. It was renamed the Second Field Army.
- The East China Field Army under the command of Chen Yi with Rao Shushi as political commissar, which originally operated in Shandong, Jiangsu, and parts of Anhui. It was renamed the Third Field Army.
- The Northeast Field Army under the command of Lin Biao with Luo Ronghuan as political commissar, which originally operated in Manchuria. It was renamed the Fourth Field Army.
- The North China Field Army under the command of Nie Rongzhen with Xu Xiangqian and Li Qingquan as political commissars, which originally operated in Hebei, Inner Mongolia, and parts of Shanxi. It formally retained its regional designation but was sometimes also unofficially referred to as the Fifth Field Army.<sup>3</sup>

A field army (FA) normally contained a few subordinate numbered "armies" (*juntuan* or *bingtuan*), each composed of several smaller numbered corps (*jun*), averaging approximately 40,000 to 45,000 soldiers. Many corps had previously existed as smaller individual columns, divisions, and brigades within specific communist base areas during the late thirties and early forties. Moreover, many of these earlier units could, in turn, be traced back to forces that had formed the core of the armed communist movement during the late twenties and early thirties. Hence, although the component units of a field army had usually gone through several transformations during the course of the communist struggle against warlords, Chinese Nationalists, and the Japanese, a significant number had long and complex histories that displayed a relatively high level of unit continuity.

The five field armies of the PLA together formed the core of the communist movement that seized power in 1949, and strongly influenced the regionally based governmental structure established by the party during the early fifties. At that time, China was divided into six administrative areas, each associated with a specific field army. The distribution of field armies and administrative areas largely reflected the pattern of military occupation established during the campaigns of the Civil War period: The Northeast Administrative Region was garrisoned by units of the Fourth FA; the North China Administrative Region, under the direct control of the central government, was garrisoned by the Fifth FA; the East China Administrative Region was under the control of the Third FA; the Central-South Administration Region was controlled by the Fourth FA; the Southwest Administrative Region was administered by the Second FA; and the Northwest Administrative Region was under the First FA.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup>Jurgen Domes, *The Government and Politics of the P.R.C.: A Time of Transition*, Westview Press: Boulder, Colorado, 1985, p. 107. We prefer to use the term "Fifth Field Army" in this Report, because of its congruence with the other numerical field army designations.

<sup>4</sup>Domes, 1985, p. 108.

Although the formal field army commands were soon abolished and replaced by 13 MRs in 1956 (shortly after China's administrative areas were dissolved), the remaining corps in most cases continued for many years to reflect, in large part, the above field army-based pattern of regional distribution. First FA units dominated the Lanzhou and Xinjiang MRs of the northwest, while Second FA units were in the Wuhan, Kunming, Chengdu, and Xizang (Tibet) MRs of the central and southwest regions, Third FA units were in the Nanjing, Jinan, and Fuzhou MRs of the east, Fourth FA units were in the Shenyang and Guangzhou MRs of the northeast and central-south regions, and Fifth FA units were in the Beijing and Inner Mongolia MRs of the north. Moreover, field army designations did not fade away immediately but were still used informally by many PRC leaders, including Mao Zedong, for some time after the early fifties.<sup>5</sup>

Many of the former field army corps were eventually moved to different locations in the sixties, seventies, and eighties, however, and the thirteen military regions were ultimately consolidated into seven by 1985.<sup>6</sup> These changes largely destroyed the original regional pattern of field army dominance, and the large, lateral networks of personal affiliations centered on entire field army structures. Nevertheless, twenty-four of the original field army corps survived, relatively intact, eventually forming the backbone of the larger, integrated group armies (*jituanjun*) established in 1985. Thus, a direct line of organizational continuity still exists between today's PLA and the armed forces of the revolutionary period, albeit one based largely on individual units. *The concept of the "field army system" used in this study therefore includes not only the huge field armies of the late forties and early fifties, but also both the earlier units out of which they were formed and those later corps that survived to constitute the basis of today's larger group armies.* This lineage structure is presented in Appendix D.<sup>7</sup>

Most of China's elder leaders served to varying degrees as either commanders or political officers within a single field army system before 1949, presumably establishing strong personal bonds based on their shared combat experiences.<sup>8</sup> Many of these individuals continued to serve with these same field army units during the Korean War, thus further reinforcing such bonds. Some even continued to maintain organizational ties with their original field army systems after the early fifties, through service in related military regions associated with those systems. Affiliations with the field army-based units of the thirties, forties,

<sup>5</sup>I am grateful to Ellis Melvin for pointing this out in a private correspondence.

<sup>6</sup>The PRC leadership initially decided on February 11, 1955, to establish 12 MRs. This number was soon increased to 13 MRs in April 1956 with the creation of the Fuzhou MR facing Taiwan. In May 1967, the Inner Mongolia MR was reduced to a provincial-level military district (MD), and in December 1968 the Xizang MR was also reduced to a district. In August 1985, the Chengdu MR acquired the Kunming MR, the Wuhan MR was abolished, and its Hubei and Henan MDs were absorbed by the Guangzhou MR and the Jinan MR, respectively, and the Fuzhou MR was absorbed by the Nanjing MR. This left seven military regions. For a map showing the location of China's remaining seven military regions, see Appendix I.

<sup>7</sup>Prior to the formation of group armies in the late eighties, an average PLA corps contained approximately 46,000 personnel and was thus only slightly larger than the corps of the late forties. Each corps was formed around three infantry divisions, each containing about 13,000 troops. An artillery regiment and a tank/antitank regiment were usually attached to each division. See Paul H. B. Godwin, *The Chinese Communist Armed Forces*, Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama: Air University Press, June 1988, p. 50. A group army, however, can vary in size from 65,000 to 100,000+ personnel.

<sup>8</sup>As William Whitson notes, among nearly 500 members of the PLA leadership, only 68 shifted from one field army system to another during the 20-year development of the PLA prior to 1949. See Whitson, 1973, p. 505. However, a few surviving elders either did not serve for long periods in a single field army system or held posts in several systems.

and fifties thus play a central role in our presentation of major factional groupings among China's elder leaders.

Field army service also played a very significant role in shaping the careers and personal bonds of those PLA officers currently holding top commander and commissar posts within the central and regional PLA. Virtually all of these leaders began their military careers as junior officers within specific field army corps during the late forties. Moreover, most of these individuals continued to serve in these same corps during the Korean War, mainly at the regimental and divisional levels, and usually continued to rise through the ranks of their original units for decades thereafter. Such long-term continuity of unit affiliation would in most cases be broken only by a short stint within a military academy, or as a staff officer within a department of the military region headquarters commanding the officer's "home" corps.

Some of these second-generation military leaders ultimately lost their power base as a result of PLA reorganizations, which often abolished entire corps. Such "uprooted" officers are apparently exceptions among the current top leadership of the PLA, however, suggesting that the loss of one's factional base through reorganization prevented many individuals from rising to the top ranks. This indicates that strong downward links with subordinates (and lateral ties with peers) probably play as important a role in estimating the factional strengths and weaknesses of central and regional PLA leaders as ties with elder patrons.<sup>9</sup> While those who were able to overcome a weak base probably did so as a result of strong support from above, their overall political influence within the party-army elite may have thus remained relatively weak.<sup>10</sup> In contrast, many individuals whose corps survived the reorganizations became commanders or political commissars of their original units or related group armies during the seventies or eighties, before being transferred to other duties.<sup>11</sup>

For the vast majority of these younger PLA leaders, association with an individual corps or group army or a related military region thus took precedence over the initial identification with an entire field army, especially in the formation of factional bases among subordinates and lateral associations among peers. For such military leaders, the analysis of long-term unit and regional affiliations therefore plays the most important role in our assessment of possible factional alliances.<sup>12</sup> Even among these officers, however, the broader field army affiliation still served as one basis for the establishment of upward links to powerful elder patrons, and, to a much lesser extent, as a basis for lateral linkages among the more senior officers.

It must be stressed, however, that field army affiliations do not provide the only basis for factional alliances of the sort that could play a prominent role in a future political crisis in China. Many elders and younger PLA leaders also held a variety of posts outside their origi-

<sup>9</sup>This supposition is incorporated into the methodology used to evaluate the political stature of PLA officers. See Appendix A.

<sup>10</sup>Specific examples of such "uprooted" officers are found in our analysis of the regional elite, presented in Chapter 5 and Appendix C.

<sup>11</sup>These more common career path characteristics are reflected in the background information on leading PLA cadres presented in Chapters 4 and 5, and in Appendix C. They also coincide with information received from interviews concerning more recent patterns of recruitment and promotion within the PLA, discussed in Chapter 7 (although such recent data also suggest that postings outside an officer's original corps, beginning largely at the division level, have become more common in recent years).

<sup>12</sup>The identification of an officer's corps affiliation often poses significant difficulties, since standard biographical sources on the PLA leadership often omit such details. See Appendix A.

nal field army systems after 1949, including service as top officials in civilian party and state organs, "unaffiliated" military regions and corps headquarters, various PLA departments in Beijing, and within the military research and development (R&D) sector. In many cases, such service provided foundations for the formation of important factional alliances that could augment, rival, or replace original field army-based associations. For example, Xiang Shouzhi, a leading elder of the Second Field Army, established strong factional associations with younger PLA leaders outside the Second FA system through long service as commander of the Nanjing Military Region of East China. Similarly, Zhang Aiping, the elder leader of a faction associated with the Third FA system, established very important personal links through long-term service as a leading figure with the defense industry and military R&D establishment.

Thus, while the notion of the field army system provides the primary frame of reference for evaluating factional alliances within the PLA leadership, other possible post-1949 affiliations are also used to present an overall pattern of possible factional linkages among both elders and younger leaders, and between the two tiers.

This Report thus takes a more qualified, multi-dimensional view of the role of the field army in the formation of personal factions than does William Whitson, reflecting the collapse of the regional orientation of field army networks and the emergence of narrower, corps-based lines of affiliation among younger officers. Moreover, whereas Whitson stresses the active political function of field army ties in everyday politics, we emphasize the importance of such links as essentially latent factors that will likely come to prominence under the stresses of a future succession struggle.

### 3. ELDER FACTIONS AND THE MILITARY

This chapter examines the field army-centered affiliations of China's most powerful remaining elders, dividing them into several potential factions that will likely play a central role in any succession struggle. While at times touching on the possible political orientations of the various elders, the chapter does not go into a discussion of the specific roles that each elder faction might play in the succession. This is reserved for the concluding chapter of the Report, which incorporates information from the entire leadership section (i.e., Chapters 1–5), as well as the major organizational and attitudinal characteristics discussed in Chapters 6–8.

Discussions with analysts and knowledgeable Chinese officials in and out of the PLA, as well as evidence provided by the pattern of leadership politics during and since the Tiananmen crisis, suggest that only a handful of elders are likely to be willing and capable of exercising decisive influence over military involvement in a post-Deng succession struggle. Some of these individuals are lifelong military officers (termed PLA or military elders). Others held prominent leadership positions in the PLA to varying degrees before 1949, but then gradually took up posts in central party or state organs after the seizure of power (termed party elders). Both groups came out of the same overall party-army structure of the pre-1949 revolutionary era, however.

The most powerful party elder under Deng Xiaoping today is Yang Shangkun, a senior member of the politburo and party CMC, and president of the PRC. Although possessing an early military background and strong party-based links to the military since the late forties, Yang is viewed as an essentially “civilian” leader. Next in importance are two senior, “retired” party elders with early military ties but long post-1949 careers in the party and state apparatus: Peng Zhen, and Bo Yibo. A third individual must also be included in this group, even though he was not in evidence during April–June 1989, and does not possess strong ties to the PLA: Chen Yun. Chen possesses enormous influence within the leadership as a result of his very long tenure as a top party official and economic specialist and is a key supporter of Premier Li Peng.<sup>1</sup>

The most senior PLA elders include Generals Zhang Aiping, Yang Dezhi, and possibly Li Desheng, whose level of control over a key MR remains unclear. Somewhat less senior but perhaps equally influential individuals in this category include Generals Hong Xuezhi, Qin Jiwei, Liu Huaqing, Xiang Shouzhi, and You Taizhong.<sup>2</sup> Finally, a less active PLA elder

<sup>1</sup>Other senior, “civilian” party elders are not regarded as active, influential leaders capable of playing a major role in the succession struggle, with or without military involvement. This probably includes the aged Song Renqiong (b. 1909), a former Second FA commissar and close associate of Deng.

<sup>2</sup>This listing of key elder military leaders could be expanded considerably, to include such figures as Ye Fei, Wang Chenghan, Xiao Ke, Chen Zaidao, Fu Kuiqing, Guo Linxiang, Zhang Zhen, Yu Qiuli, Chen Xilian, and Li Yaowen. Although some of these men will be identified below as subordinate members of proposed PLA elder factions, none is viewed as a major figure able to decisively influence future PLA involvement in a succession crisis. In some cases, this is because of the known poor health of the individual. In other instances, it is because the potential influence of an individual within the PLA is seen as being too narrowly focused, residing in bureaucracies or service arms that will likely play only a minimal role in any likely pattern of future PLA political involvement. In yet other cases, it is because an individual was judged to be insufficiently ambitious or his *guanxi* network insufficiently potent to play a significant role.

(largely because of his frail health), but an individual with considerable influence within the military, is Wang Zhen. Although rarely appearing in public, Wang apparently played a central role, in collaboration with Deng and Yang Shangkun, in directing the military response to the Tiananmen demonstrators in April–June 1989.

Although he is strongly supported by younger, subordinate leaders in the military and must be considered a major political force, Yang Shangkun has few unit-based ties to other party and military elders. Among the elders, therefore, he is treated as a “faction of one.” Chen Yun and Peng Zhen are loosely affiliated with one another largely on the basis of nonmilitary ties, and hence are considered a latent grouping. In contrast to the relatively loose associations existing among the party elders, most military elders can be divided into three major factions, each displaying significant internal unity based on past affiliations with different field army systems. The most significant faction is led by Deng Xiaoping and includes his fellow elders from the Second FA system, as well as Hong Xuezhi. The second most important faction is associated with Zhang Aiping and several members of the former Third FA system. The third faction is most closely associated with Yang Dezhi and a few remaining members of the former Fifth FA system. It is also probably supported by party elder Bo Yibo.<sup>3</sup> Finally, Wang Zhen and Li Desheng each stand as “outsiders” among the PLA elders, possessing few clear organizational links to their military peers, but with significant affiliations within specific segments of the regional military. These elder factions and groupings will be discussed in the general order of their overall importance to the succession.

#### DENG XIAOPING, THE SECOND FIELD ARMY ELDERS, AND HONG XUEZHI

This elder faction currently occupies a leading position among all party and military elders because of Deng’s overall dominance within the regime, and because of the prominent positions attained by his former Second FA associates during the reforms, undoubtedly as a result of his support. Of the seventeen officers identified as three-star generals of the PLA in 1988, no less than nine were from the Second Field Army, or served within Deng’s unit of the Eighth Route Army, the 129th Division. Moreover, prior to the major personnel reshuffles in 1985, five out of the eleven military region commanders were associated with the Second FA system.<sup>4</sup>

The most important members of this Second FA contingent are Generals Qin Jiwei (b.1914), Liu Huaqing (b.1916), Xiang Shouzhi (b.1917), and You Taizhong (b.1918). All four men owe their careers to Deng, yet also enjoy a significant level of independent status and authority within the PLA. Qin Jiwei and Liu Huaqing still hold top posts in the leadership, as minister of defense/CMC member and vice chairman of the CMC, respectively. Xiang Shouzhi and You Taizhong held a series of very powerful posts until their retirement in 1990, especially within the regional military. Other, less powerful Second FA associates among the elders include Guo Linxiang, Song Renqiong, and Wang Chenghan. One additional former senior Second FA leader is decidedly not a member of this elder grouping (Li Desheng), while

<sup>3</sup>Although definitely a party elder (given his continuous service in leading posts outside the military after the early fifties), Bo is nevertheless placed with a PLA elder faction because of his strong pre-1949 ties to elements of the Fifth FA system.

<sup>4</sup>Ngok Lee, *China's Defence Modernisation and Military Leadership*, New York: Pergamon Press, 1989, pp. 34, 38.

another less senior veteran of the Second FA enjoys the support of Deng Xiaoping yet is probably most closely linked to Yang Shangkun: Yang Baibing.

The pre-1949 careers of Qin, Liu, Xiang, and You are very closely intertwined, although Liu Huaqing worked almost exclusively in the political and propaganda sections of the military, while the other three were combat unit commanders. All four served together in the Fourth Front Army in the early/mid-thirties (along with Chen Zaidao,<sup>5</sup> Li Desheng, and Wang Chenghan) and in Deng's 129th Division of the Eighth Route Army, participating in many major engagements of the wartime period. Qin Jiwei emerged from that period as the senior officer among the four. By 1949, he was leading the 15th Corps of the Fourth Army within the Second FA. He subsequently led that force into Korea. Xiang Shouzhi served directly under Qin during this period. He commanded the 44th Division of Qin Jiwei's 15th Corps, and concurrently served as political commissar. In 1949, Liu Huaqing was head of the political department of the 11th Corps of the Third Army within the Second FA, then commanded by Chen Xilian. In 1949, You Taizhong commanded the 34th Division of the 12th Corps, also under the Third Army, and also led it in Korea. Liu Huaqing was the only one of the four who did not serve in the Korean War. He remained in the southwest in the early fifties, serving as director of the political department of the Second FA's Military and Political University.

The careers of these four leaders diverged significantly after the early fifties. Liu Huaqing became a major figure in the development of the Chinese Navy. He was a vice-president and deputy political commissar in the First Naval Academy from 1952 to 1954. He was then sent to Leningrad's Voroshilov Naval Academy. After graduation in 1958, Liu served as first deputy political commander and chief of staff of the Lushun Naval Base and then as deputy commander and deputy political commissar, respectively, of the North Sea Fleet and the South Sea Fleet. He ultimately became deputy naval chief of staff in 1972 and commander of the PLA Navy (and full member of the party central committee) in 1982. Liu also worked in the defense industry sector, including service in the late fifties and early sixties as director of the Seventh Research Institute of the Ministry of Defense and vice minister of the Sixth Ministry of Machine Building Industry (in charge of ship building), and from 1966 to 1970 as a deputy director of the Commission on Science and Technology for National Defense under the late Marshal Nie Rongzhen. After the GPCR, Liu spent several years in the GSD, prior to becoming commander of the Navy. He was identified as an assistant to the chief of the general staff in 1979 and was named a deputy chief in the following year. In 1985, Liu resigned from the CCP CC and became a member of the Central Advisory Commission (CAC). He then became a deputy secretary-general of the CMC in 1987 and gave up his naval post the following year. He also became a CMC vice chairman after Tiananmen, at the Fifth Plenum of the 13th Central Committee.

Qin Jiwei served for long periods after 1949 as a regional military leader, beginning in the southwest, where he rose from provincial military district deputy commander to military region commander between 1953 and 1975. He was then transferred to the Beijing MR, where he served as deputy political commissar from 1975 to 1977 and as political commissar from 1977 to 1980 and then as MR commander from 1980 to 1987. He also served concurrently as

<sup>5</sup>Qin Jiwei in particular had an early history of close association with Chen Zaidao. They both joined guerrilla bands in eastern Hubei after the Autumn Harvest Uprisings in the twenties. See Whitson, 1973, p. 51.



first secretary of the Beijing MR party committee from at least 1982 onward. He became state councillor, minister of national defense, and a CMC member in 1988.

You Taizhong also became a dominant regional figure after the communist victory. Upon his return from Korea, he initially continued to serve with the 12th Corps in Jiangsu (within the Nanjing MR), becoming deputy commander and then commander by the early sixties, after graduating from the PLA Higher Military Academy in 1960. He then became commander of the 27th Corps of the Third FA system, also located at that time in the Nanjing MR. In late 1970 the 27th Corps was transferred to the Beijing MR, possibly to balance the 38th Corps of the Fourth FA, which had been brought into the region from the Shenyang MR. You subsequently became a deputy commander of the Beijing MR and concurrently head of the Inner Mongolia Military District. He was a dominant figure in Inner Mongolia during much of the seventies. He was then transferred to two other regional posts, commanding the Chengdu MR from 1980 to 1982 and then the Guangzhou MR from 1982 to 1987. He was finally sent to Beijing in 1988 to become the second secretary of the CMC Discipline Inspection Commission (DIC). You retired after Tiananmen, becoming a member of the CAC.

Xiang Shouzhi continued under the 15th Corps in Wuhan after the Korean War, becoming deputy commander and eventually head of the Fourth Army. Units of the Fourth Army became dominant in Central and Southwest China in the fifties. During the sixties and much of the seventies, Xiang was a major figure in the strategic missile sector, serving in a variety of posts before becoming head of the Second Artillery in 1975, the PLA organ responsible for China's strategic missile development. He held that post until 1977. The remainder of his career, prior to his retirement in 1990, was spent as deputy commander and then commander of the Nanjing MR, where he was regarded as a very powerful figure. He is now also a member of the CAC. In terms of party seniority, Qin Jiwei is the dominant figure, followed by You Taizhong, Xiang Shouzhi, and Liu Huaqing.<sup>6</sup>

These four Second FA elders are associated to varying degrees with other party and military elders. The most likely candidates are Chen Xilian, Chen Zaidao, and less influential former members of the Second FA system such as Wang Chenghan, Song Renqiong, and Guo Linxiang, all strong supporters of Deng.<sup>7</sup> Qin Jiwei in particular shared some significant

<sup>6</sup>Qin Jiwei is the only one of the four PLA elders to serve on the politburo, elected as an alternate at the 12th Congress in 1982. You was an alternate CC member as early as the 9th Party Congress, and then served as a full member at every subsequent Congress until the 13th, when he was demoted to serve as Congress deputy. Xiang was a deputy to the 11th Congress in 1977, became a full member of the 12th CC, and was again demoted to deputy of the 13th Congress. Liu became a member of the 12th CC in 1982, resigned in 1985, but was named a deputy of the 13th Congress in 1987. In these instances, demotion to deputy status did not signify a loss of favor with Deng. Although usually viewed as a prelude to formal retirement, in the cases of You, Xiang, and Liu, it was almost certainly intended by Deng as a way to make room for younger supporters while not entirely eliminating the influence of these senior Second FA colleagues. This is also suggested by the fact that all three became members of the CAC at the 13th Congress. Although also often viewed as a prelude to full retirement, CAC membership can provide a platform for the continued exercise of political influence by a leader (e.g., Hong Xuezhong).

<sup>7</sup>Wang Chenghan was a regimental commander in Liu Bocheng's 129th Division and commanded the 181st Division of the 18th Army in 1949. He also served in the Fourth Front Army before 1937, but then developed strong links with the Fifth FA system during the Civil War. Wang spent most of his post-1949 military career in the southwest, as deputy commander and then commander of the Chengdu MR. He then served, from 1985 until his retirement in 1990, as commissar of the AMS. He was a member of the 12th CCP CC, but now only serves on the CAC. Song Renqiong was head of the political department of the 129th Division and a deputy political commissar of the Second FA in late 1949. He held a series of civilian party and government posts after the seizure of power, including first secretary of the Northeast China Bureau of the CCP CC, head of the CC Organization Department, and member of the CCP Secretariat. Song retired in the early eighties but has served as vice-chair and member of the CAC Standing Committee (CAC SC) since 1985. Guo Linxiang was the political commissar of the 61st Corps of

combat experiences with Chen Xilian.<sup>8</sup> In addition, You Taizhong might also be close to Li Desheng because of their common affiliation with the 12th Corps of the Second FA (see below).

Despite the diversity of their careers after 1949, Qin, Liu, You, and Xiang are almost certainly related more to one another (and to Deng Xiaoping) than to any other remaining elders in the leadership. Moreover, their career backgrounds suggest the existence of strong networks of supporters in a variety of military organizations and regions after 1949, specifically the PLA Navy, the southwest, the Beijing MR, the Nanjing MR, the Second Artillery, and the military science and technology and defense industry sectors. Such possible links will be examined in the following two chapters on the central and regional PLA leadership.

Hong Xuezhi (b.1913) is not a veteran of the Second FA system. He is closely associated with the Second FA Faction, however, because of strong ties established during the seventies and eighties. Hong served in units under Huang Kecheng (now deceased), a major figure in the Fourth FA system, throughout much of his pre-1949 career. By the mid-thirties, he had become chief of staff of the 25th Corps under Huang. He then served in the same capacity in Huang's Third Division in Northern Jiangsu during the early/mid-forties, eventually becoming a division deputy commander by the end of the Anti-Japanese War. During the Civil War, Hong served in leadership posts in Northeast China under Lin Biao, and by 1949, he was commander of the 15th Army of the Fourth Field Army. He then became head of logistics and concurrently deputy commander of the Chinese People's Volunteers (CPV) during the Korean War, serving under Peng Dehuai. After returning to China, he became deputy director of the GLD, under his mentor Huang Kecheng. Hong succeeded Huang as director of the GLD in late 1956, when the latter became chief of the GSD, and served in that post until 1960, when he was dismissed from all offices as a result of leadership clashes during the Great Leap Forward. He was implicated at that time with both Huang Kecheng and Peng Dehuai as an opponent of Mao Zedong, and was banished to Jilin to serve as a provincial industrial department head. He did not reappear until he was rehabilitated by Deng Xiaoping in 1977 and made head of the National Defense Industry Office of the State Council, where he probably had opportunities to work with Zhang Aiping on the development of military science and technology (see below for more on Zhang). Hong also first became a full member of the party central committee in that year at the 11th Party Congress. In 1980, he was named by Deng to head the GLD, and thus returned to his former area of military expertise to assist Deng in the effort to limit military dissatisfaction over the significant defense cuts implemented under the reforms. Two years later, Hong was named to the CMC, and eventually became deputy secretary-general of that body under Yang Shangkun, serving alongside Liu Huaqing. He relinquished his GLD post to his junior associate, Zhao Nanqi. Hong Xuezhi

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the 18th Army during the Civil War and thus also established links with the Fifth FA system. Guo spent many years as a commissar of military regions after 1949, including service in Chengdu, Xinjiang, and Nanjing. When he retired in 1990, he was a deputy director of the GPD and concurrently secretary of the PLA Central Discipline Inspection Commission under the CMC. Prior posts included political commissar of the Chengdu and Nanjing Military Regions. Despite their impressive careers, none of these Second FA elders is considered a major powerholder among the top elite today.

<sup>8</sup>Qin Jiwei survived the disastrous defeat of Zhang Guotao's West Route Army in the northwest in late 1936, along with Chen Xilian and Li Xiannian, and then went on to serve under Chen in the forties. On balance, however, Chen Xilian is probably closer to Li Desheng (see the discussion of Li, below). Moreover, he has been in disgrace since 1980, and reportedly exerts little influence within the leadership today.

formally retired from his CMC post after Tiananmen, reportedly leaving office on very amicable terms with Deng.

Reports have appeared in the Hong Kong press since June 1989 suggesting that Hong Xuezhong was against the Tiananmen crackdown. This seems highly unlikely. He did not join with Zhang Aiping and other PLA elders to caution against the use of the PLA to enforce martial law in 1989.<sup>9</sup> More important, unlike Zhang Aiping and Yang Dezhi, Hong owes his rehabilitation to Deng, and it is very unlikely that he would challenge his benefactor's judgment on such a crucial issue.

Hong Xuezhong may enjoy some personal ties with various elders through common service with the Fourth FA system, but it is unlikely that many of these ties are strong. For example, Hong undoubtedly had some interaction with both Peng Zhen and Chen Yun during the late forties, as a provincial-level commander and column commander in the northeast. But there is no record that he established any close links with the two party elders at that time. Xiao Ke (b.1908), a very senior surviving PLA elder, was chief of staff of the Fourth Field Army in the northeast during the late forties. But he was also associated with Wang Zhen and the Second Front Army during the thirties (considered part of the First FA system), and with units of the Fifth FA system during much of the forties, under Nie Rongzhen. Hence, it is unlikely that he established any close personal ties with Hong. Liu Zhenhua (b.1921) is a significantly less senior PLA elder, but a "pure" Fourth FA officer from the northeast. Moreover, he participated in many of the same Fourth FA campaigns as Hong. The two men apparently did not serve in the same unit, however, and Liu is not regarded as a significant political figure today. Hong's most direct Fourth FA associate among the surviving elders is probably Chen Zaidao, regarded as a minor PLA elder.

Aside from Hong Xuezhong's limited links with former members of the Fourth FA, the historical diversity of that entire field army system throws doubt on its utility as a foundation for the formation of a coherent, enduring leadership faction. As William Whitson points out, to a greater extent than in the case of the other field armies, the Fourth FA was composed of a patchwork of sub-elites brought together to seize Manchuria and then separated to serve in very different regions after 1949, particularly in the northeast and the south.<sup>10</sup> It is therefore particularly hazardous to assume that those many remaining PLA leaders associated with the Fourth FA have a strong sense of mutual loyalty and affiliation today.

Thus, Hong Xuezhong should be included with the Second FA Faction, given his close ties to Deng Xiaoping since the late seventies. However, Hong's support will probably not add a great deal of political weight to this group. Despite his considerable prestige within the PLA, he is not regarded as a powerful elder similar to Yang Shangkun, Yang Dezhi, or Zhang Aiping. This is partly because he was out of power for nearly twenty years, as a result of his close association with Peng Dehuai. It is also because much of his career has been spent in military logistics, outside the mainstream of unit command. Hong's value largely derives

<sup>9</sup>It should be pointed out, however, that Hong was still on active service during the Tiananmen incident, which would likely have prevented him from adding his voice to the other PLA elders (all retired), even if he had desired to do so.

<sup>10</sup>Whitson, 1973, pp. 261-262. Further details on the importance of this north-south division within the Fourth FA elite are provided in Chapters 4 and 5.

from his general prestige with the PLA, and his downward links to important central leaders such as Zhao Nanqi, discussed in the next chapter.

Overall, the Second FA elders and Hong Xuezhi could serve as a powerful force for continued reform and military modernization in a post-Deng Xiaoping setting, especially if they ally with like-minded elders associated largely with the Third FA system such as Zhang Aiping (below). Liu Huaqing in particular has shown himself to be a strong supporter of pragmatic policy measures and especially of expanded scientific and technological exchanges with the West. He has also almost certainly supported recent Chinese military purchases from Russia. Liu will likely take over the leadership of this faction, should Deng die before Hong and his other Second FA colleagues.

### YANG SHANGKUN

A veteran of the Long March, Yang (b.1907) has been an important figure within both the party and the military since the mid-thirties, although he did not enter the highest levels of the CCP until the late seventies, and never served extensively with military units in the field. Yang began his party career in the early thirties as a propaganda official in the cities. He soon became a high-level political officer in the Red Army.<sup>11</sup> By the end of the decade, he was serving in military units within the northwest (especially in Shaanxi province), and as a leader in the communist guerrilla movement against the Japanese. Yang entered the central departments of the party by the early/middle forties, however, especially those overseeing military affairs, including the North China Party Bureau,<sup>12</sup> the Eighth Route Army Headquarters, and the CMC. He never again served in the field. By 1948-49, he was assisting Zhou Enlai in directing both party and CMC affairs, as director of the General Office of the party central committee. The General Office sets the agenda for and provides expertise to the members of the CMC, thereby influencing the definition of key military issues and their relative priority among top decisionmakers.

Yang continued to hold leading posts in various departments of the central committee and CMC after 1949, including service for many years as deputy secretary-general of the party under Deng Xiaoping. He also served alongside Deng during the acrimonious negotiations with the Soviet Union in the late fifties and early sixties, and worked closely with him through his continuing service as director of the CCP CC General Office. A close relationship between Deng Xiaoping and Yang Shangkun undoubtedly emerged as a result of these interactions.

Yang's high-level party posts, along with his support for stronger Leninist-style party organizational control over ordinary citizens during the late fifties and early sixties and his

<sup>11</sup>Yang is listed in William Whitson's exhaustive presentation of pre-1949 orders of battle for the PLA as political commissar to Peng Dehuai when Peng commanded the Third Corps during the Fifth Encirclement Campaign of 1933-34, under the First Front Army headed by Zhu De and Zhou Enlai. Apparently, no surviving PLA elders served with Yang in that unit. See Whitson, 1973, Chart G, Evolution of the Fourth Field Army, 1926-68, between pp. 288-289. Klein and Clark state that he held this post until 1937. See Donald W. Klein and Anne B. Clark, *Biographic Dictionary of Chinese Communism 1921-1965*, 2 vols., Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971, p. 985.

<sup>12</sup>Yang was the secretary of this important organ in the late thirties, after Peng Zhen and before Bo Yibo took the same post. See James Pinckney Harrison, *The Long March to Power: A History of the Chinese Communist Party, 1921-1972*, New York: Praeger Publishers, 1972, p. 290.

participation in Peng Zhen's efforts to blunt Mao's growing radicalism in the mid-sixties, eventually led to his early purge during the Cultural Revolution. Deng Xiaoping returned him to power in the late seventies, however. He was first elected to the party central committee in 1979, and served for several years as a dominant figure in Guangdong politics, as first secretary of the Guangzhou Municipal Party Committee and second secretary of the Guangdong Provincial Party Committee. Yang became a standing committee member and secretary-general of the CMC in 1981 and during the following year was named to the party politburo, at the 12th Party Congress.

As a close colleague of Deng and long-term member of the CMC, Yang Shangkun subsequently played an instrumental role in implementing Deng's strategy of military reform during the mid-eighties, and was given control over the day-to-day activities of the PLA. He then was named president of the PRC in 1988.

While having at times expressed relatively "liberal" views on economic and political development prior to Tiananmen, Yang Shangkun has shown himself to be a strong supporter of party and military repression following the events of June 1989. In collaboration with his younger half-brother GPD Director and CMC Secretary General Yang Baibing (discussed in the next chapter), Yang Shangkun currently enjoys a very strong, probably dominant position within both party and military organs in Beijing. He is the last remaining elder to hold high formal posts in both the party and the state apparatus, as president of the PRC, politburo member, and first vice chairman of the party CMC. Moreover, despite the fact that CCP General Secretary Jiang Zemin succeeded Deng as CMC Chairman in November 1989, there is little doubt that Yang (along with his younger half-brother) continues to control the activities of that key body, with the support and approval of Deng.<sup>13</sup> Equally important, several key leaders within the PLA general departments and the regional military structure, along with heads of armed units in the Beijing area, are regarded as personally loyal to the Yangs, and to Yang Baibing in particular.<sup>14</sup> As a result of these factors, most analysts expect that Yang Shangkun will take over from Deng as China's paramount ruler, should the latter die first.

Despite such strengths, Yang's position and influence within the military are by no means unassailable. Many analysts of China's military insist that he and his younger half-brother are both strongly disliked by officers throughout the PLA.<sup>15</sup> Professional commanders in charge of combat units who are not part of the Yang network, and younger military officers in particular, are reportedly highly suspicious of the Yangs' ultimate political intentions and did not like their post-Tiananmen efforts to reemphasize the role of politics and ideology within the PLA. Such moves were seen by some to reverse the earlier reform emphasis on military training and other "secular" aspects of PLA modernization.<sup>16</sup> Equally important, Yang Shangkun, and probably his younger brother as well, are also reportedly strongly disliked by many older leaders in and out of the PLA. Some observers insist that Peng Zhen detests Yang and that many elders view him as an "outsider" to the party leadership core estab-

<sup>13</sup>Further details on the relationship between Jiang and the Yangs are provided in Chapter 4.

<sup>14</sup>The likely structure of the Yang support network within the PLA will be outlined in Chapters 4 and 5.

<sup>15</sup>One possible exception is Wang Ruilin, a high-level PLA leader at the center. See the discussion of Yang Baibing's factional network in Chapter 4.

<sup>16</sup>Divisions within the PLA over attitudes toward modernization and other issues are discussed in detail in Chapter 8.

lished by Mao Zedong in the forties, because of his affiliation at that time with a group of Moscow-led leaders termed the "Twenty-Eight Bolsheviks." Moreover, many senior PLA officers reportedly do not regard the elder Yang as an equal, since he has held few field positions. They also apparently resent the fact that neither Yang served in the Korean War, where so many senior PLA leaders established or embellished their reputations.

Although the accuracy of such observations cannot be absolutely confirmed, it is probably safe to say that Yang Shangkun would not have risen to his current powerful position at the top of China's leadership structure if it were not for his association with Deng Xiaoping. Whatever independent personal power base he possesses has been built up over time since 1949 through his continuous service in the high-level party organs in Beijing, including those directing the military, and most recently through his collaboration with Yang Baibing. Therefore, the ultimate strength of Yang Shangkun and his younger half-brother in a future political crisis would likely depend on the extent to which the two leaders have expanded their factional network within the major central and regional organs of the PLA. Despite some notable gains, the support they enjoy in these areas may actually be very "soft" compared to the long-term historical ties and deep-rooted organizational bases in the PLA enjoyed by other elders, especially those with continuous service within PLA units.

#### CHEN YUN AND PENG ZHEN

These two figures are both very powerful elders with a long history as senior leaders within key party and state organs. In recent years, they have enjoyed a dominant position among the party elders under Deng and have been central players in post-Tiananmen party politics, although both are increasingly encumbered by poor health. The two leaders are associated on the basis of common service in the "white" areas during the thirties, their key involvement in Mao Zedong's rectification movement during the Yan'an period of the forties, and their brief service together in the northeast within the Fourth FA system. In addition, Peng Zhen and Chen Yun led the effort to restrain Mao's attempts during the 1958-65 period to undermine the authority of the party bureaucracy in the areas of cultural work and economic policy, respectively. Most recently, both party elders apparently played a strong supporting role behind Deng Xiaoping, Yang Shangkun, and Wang Zhen during the Tiananmen crisis, along with Bo Yibo. They attended many of the key meetings held during April-June 1989 and occupied top positions at an important June 9, 1989, meeting between Deng and martial law commanders, taking precedence over the younger leaders who made up the politburo standing committee.<sup>17</sup>

While holding considerable status and prestige within the party and state apparatus, Chen Yun and Peng Zhen are far less closely linked to the PLA than Deng Xiaoping, Yang Shangkun, and Wang Zhen. They each served, to varying degrees, primarily as political officers within one or more field army systems only during the thirties and forties. Because of the diversity and brevity of their service with the military, therefore, none can be clearly identified with any single PLA grouping. Thus, while discussed separately, they are placed together as a "loose" grouping of civilian party elders.

<sup>17</sup>Byrnes, 1990, p. 143.

Chen Yun (b.1905) is perhaps second only to Deng Xiaoping in overall stature within the CCP today. He is a long-standing, high-level party member, first elected to the central committee in 1931 and to the politburo in 1934. Chen was a strong supporter of Mao Zedong during the pre-1949 period, especially during the crucial Zunyi Conference of 1935, and as a key figure in the Yan'an rectification movement of the early forties, which Mao used to establish his primacy within the communist movement. His current power base primarily derives from his many years of service as a leading planning official within the finance and economics system of the central government, especially as head of the Finance and Economics Group of the party central committee.<sup>18</sup>

Chen's long service to the party at the highest levels and his dominant position in economic affairs place him above other surviving elders with extensive service after 1949 in the planning sector, such as Bo Yibo. Today, he is generally viewed as the major supporter of conservative members of the politburo standing committee, including Li Peng, Song Ping, and Yao Yilin. The latter two were also his subordinates in the planning apparatus during the fifties and early sixties.

In contrast to his high power and authority within the party and state sectors, Chen Yun's direct influence within the PLA is probably less than that of any of the other elders. He was mainly active in the Nationalist-controlled "white areas" during the thirties, and in various government and party departments concerned with economic affairs and organization work during the forties, particularly in the northwest and northeast. His few contacts with the military were largely limited to brief service as a political commissar to various units in the northeast during the Civil War. However, he has been described as an important figure in the establishment of the East Manchurian Military Region in 1946.<sup>19</sup>

Any close, personal relationships with current military elders thus probably developed during Chen's early service in the northeast, and would likely be with the few remaining senior members of the Fourth FA system. These include Xiao Ke, Liu Zhenhua, and Chen Zaidao. However, each of these individuals is viewed as a relatively minor figure among PLA power-holders today. Moreover, although many younger PLA leaders also began their military careers in units of the Fourth FA system,<sup>20</sup> it is very unlikely that they established any lasting ties with Chen as a result, given their low positions at the time, and the brevity of Chen's service.

Chen's commitment to material incentives and staged economic growth placed him in opposition to Mao's more radical approach to development in the fifties and sixties. In more recent years, he has been the most important critic of far-reaching and accelerated economic reform, favoring gradual and modest changes in the command economy with only limited support from market forces. This has produced considerable tensions with Deng Xiaoping. The two men clearly differ strongly over issues relating to the proper balance to strike between market forces and centralized, planned control. Moreover, Chen probably resents the fact

<sup>18</sup>For example, see Wilson and Ji, 1990, p. 34.

<sup>19</sup>Whitson, 1973, p. 305.

<sup>20</sup>These include Zhao Nanqi, director of the GLD, Liu Anyuan, political commissar of the Second Artillery, Jiang Shunxue, president of the highly influential AMS, Yu Yongbo, deputy director of the GPD, Han Huaizhi, deputy chief of the GSD, and a significant number of MR heads, including Song Keda, Zhang Wannian, Gu Hui, Gu Shanjing, Cao Pengsheng, and Zhang Zhongxian. Such ties in most cases do not provide a solid basis for establishing affiliations among these men, however, as will be shown in Chapters 4 and 5.

that, despite his much earlier entrance into the politburo, Deng is today the more powerful figure of the two. This is probably due to Deng's stronger ties with the PLA. However, the two leaders are not mortal enemies, each dedicated to the other's removal. They worked closely together in the early sixties to recover from the ravages produced by Mao Zedong's Great Leap Forward. And they certainly agree, as do all the elders, on the crucial need for firm party control over the military, and the importance of military force in preserving the regime and maintaining social order. It is very unlikely, therefore, that these two senior elders would endanger existing stability by confronting one another while they are both still active in the leadership.

Overall, the contrast between Chen Yun's strong position in the party and state organs and weak position within the military has thus far presented no apparent problems for the regime, given the past stability and unity prevailing within the party elite and in the party's relations with society. In addition, Deng's very strong connections with the PLA may have compensated greatly for Chen's deficiencies in his relations with the military. This raises the obvious question of whether Chen would be able to maintain his dominant position within the leadership in a post-Deng setting.

Peng Zhen (b.1902) has been a high-level party official since the early fifties, especially active in the areas of party organization, political-legal affairs and state administration. His background overlaps at significant points with that of Chen Yun. For example, Peng's early career was also spent largely in the "white areas," as a party organizer. He was a top political officer in base areas in the north during the early war years (building on contacts he established as a young leader in the labor and youth movements in Shanxi), and then held important posts in the party apparatus in Yan'an. As with Chen, he played a central role in the rectification movement of the early forties. Peng then became the top party leader and PLA political officer in Manchuria in the early years of the Civil War, again in collaboration with Chen Yun.<sup>21</sup> After 1949, he served briefly over Wang Zhen as head of the Xinjiang Military Region, but then left the military to hold a series of high-level party and state posts. For much of the fifties and sixties, Peng was the top party leader in the Beijing party committee. During the mid-fifties and early sixties, he also was a major figure in the National People's Congress and was one of the most prominent figures during the early sixties, along with Deng Xiaoping, in the ideological dispute with the Soviet Union. He also served under Deng for several years as the second-ranking secretary of the party secretariat, which no doubt provided an opportunity for the establishment of contacts with Yang Shangkun. As mayor of Beijing in the sixties, Peng Zhen was the first high-ranking party official to fall victim to the Cultural Revolution. He was linked with then General Office Director Yang Shangkun, PLA Senior General Luo Ruiqing, and Propaganda Director Lu Dingyi in a group known as the "Four Family Store," which was accused of attempting to circumvent Mao Zedong's authority by using control over the party organization and propaganda network.<sup>22</sup>

Peng has been most closely associated with hardline positions since his rehabilitation by Deng Xiaoping in the late seventies. He was a strong opponent of political reform while chairman of the standing committee of the National People's Congress (NPC) in the mid-

<sup>21</sup>Peng had been sent with Chen, Lin Biao, and other communist leaders to Manchuria to develop the communist movement there immediately after the Japanese defeat. See Klein and Clark, 1971, p. 715.

<sup>22</sup>Harrison, 1972, p. 496; Klein and Clark, 1971, pp. 713-714.



eighties, and was among those senior leaders most opposed to former General Secretary Zhao Ziyang. Although he stepped down from his NPC post and retired in 1988, Peng continued to give support to other conservative, hardline leaders in their efforts to reverse many of Zhao's reforms. He also strongly supported the use of military force during the Tiananmen crisis, as noted above.

Peng Zhen's past links with the PLA are considerably stronger than those of Chen Yun, but less than those of Bo Yibo and Yang Shangkun. They stem from his service in units associated with both the Fifth (North China) and the Fourth Field Armies. In 1938–41, Peng served as political commissar to Nie Rongzhen in command of the Jin-Cha-Ji (Shanxi-Qahar-Hebei) Border Region under units of the Eighth Route Army that later became part of the Fifth Field Army. Later, in Manchuria during the Civil War period, he became political commissar of both the Northeast Democratic Allied Army (under Lin Biao), which became the core of the Fourth Field Army, and of the Northeast Political and Military Academy. He was withdrawn from Manchuria soon after the disastrous defeat of Lin's forces in the Battle of Siping in April 1947. William Whitson's description of Peng as a "senior member" of the Fourth Field Army elite thus seems exaggerated, considering both his limited service in that system and his earlier links to the Fifth Field Army.<sup>23</sup>

Nevertheless, as with Chen Yun, whatever personal links Peng may enjoy with the PLA today are probably based primarily on his service with former senior associates of the Fourth Field Army in the northeast. However, few such individuals remain among the top PLA elders today, and none is active as a major powerholder in Beijing. It is also possible that Peng established personal relationships with the few remaining senior PLA elders from the Fifth Field Army system, such as Yang Dezhi (see below). In addition, he may enjoy some residual influence in the Beijing MR, as a result of his long service as a leading official of the capital, and because leaders of the Fifth FA maintained uninterrupted control over North China for many years after 1949. Yet such ties are probably tenuous at best, not only because of Peng's early, and relatively brief, association with the Fifth FA, but also because no members of the current top party or military leadership in North China can be directly linked to him. Finally, of perhaps greatest importance is the fact that Peng is increasingly constrained by his extremely advanced age and resulting poor health. Regardless of his possible links with PLA groupings, it is not very likely that he will play a decisive role in a post-Deng succession struggle, if he survives to see it.

Overall, the Chen Yun/Peng Zhen Grouping is probably the least cohesive of the major elder factions, yet is currently the most important force within the top party leadership outside of the Deng Xiaoping/Yang Shangkun alliance. It will doubtless continue to stand for conservative views and to defend the prerogatives of the party leadership against any attempt at perceived ideological backsliding or political liberalization, probably with the support of hardliners within the military and propaganda organs. In addition, this grouping will almost certainly continue to defend its slate of preferred "successors" within the highest levels of the party leadership, including Premier Li Peng. Finally, a basis exists for a political alliance between this grouping, the Yang Shangkun Faction, and Wang Zhen (discussed below), because of their common, close association with and support for the Tiananmen crackdown,

<sup>23</sup>Whitson, 1973, pp. 309, 333.

and the fact that they currently wield comparatively greater political influence within the regime than their elder colleagues within the PLA.

### ZHANG AIPING AND THE THIRD FIELD ARMY SYSTEM

This is the second strongest FA-based faction among the elder leadership. Its leader, Zhang Aiping (b.1910), has a long and distinguished military career, including service as both a political commissar and a commander. His early leadership experiences were with Peng Dehuai's Third Army under the First Front Army in the early thirties, when he most likely became associated with Lin Biao and his followers. However, most of his pre-1949 career was spent in units associated with the Third Field Army system under Chen Yi and Rao Shushi. He served as a brigade and division commander of units associated with the Fourth Front Army in the early forties, which later became part of the Third FA. In this capacity, he was named a deputy commander of the Central China Military Region in 1945–46. In 1947, Zhang's division became part of the East China Army, renamed the Third Field Army in 1949. By that time, he was serving as a deputy commander of the Seventh Corps of the Third FA under Wang Jianan and Tan Zhenlin.<sup>24</sup>

From 1949 to 1951, Zhang was commander and concurrently political commissar of the Naval Forces within the East China Military Region (precursor to the Nanjing MR); he then became commander of the Zhejiang Military District. This was followed by service as chief of staff of both the East China Military Region and the Third Field Army, in 1952 and 1953. Zhang then went on to serve from 1954 to 1982 as a deputy director of the GSD, through the support of Su Yu, chief of the GSD and Zhang's superior in the Third FA system. Zhang's most notable post-1949 service, however, was with Nie Rongzhen (and earlier, with Su Yu), in the development of China's defense industry, particularly in the area of nuclear weapons and satellites. While serving in the GSD, Zhang also held leadership posts in the National Defense Industries Office (NDIO), the Commission on Science and Technology for National Defense, the State Science and Technology Commission, and the Science and Technology Equipment Division under the CMC. He also became a deputy secretary-general of the CMC, state councillor, and minister of national defense in 1982, during the early period of military reform under Deng. Zhang Aiping was identified as one of Deng's key supporters among the PLA elders during that period, along with Yang Dezhi, Liu Huaqing, Hong Xuezhai, and Yang Shangkun. Presumably, his prestige in the PLA and his expertise and contacts in the defense industry were the key factors he brought to Deng's efforts to strengthen military modernization.<sup>25</sup>

Although formally "retired" today (he now only serves on the standing committee of the CAC), Zhang remains a highly influential figure in the PLA, particularly among those individuals associated with military modernization and science and technology. Informants suggest that he is widely admired within the military as a relatively cultured and sophisticated leader with great integrity. He was reportedly adamantly opposed to the use of the PLA during Tiananmen, and signed a letter with six of his senior military colleagues at

<sup>24</sup>See Whitson, 1973, Chart E, Evolution of the 3rd Field Army, 1934–68, and Chart F, 3rd Field Army Order of Battle, February–June, 1949, between pp. 202–203 and pp. 244–245, respectively.

<sup>25</sup>Lee, 1989, pp. 226–227; and Ellis Joffe, *The Chinese Army After Mao*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987, pp. 164–165.

the time martial law was declared in May 1989, cautioning the leadership against such action.<sup>26</sup> Since that event, all six of his colleagues have publicly stated their support for the Tiananmen crackdown. Zhang alone remains silent, however. He reportedly continues to receive visitors and is in good health but still refuses to make statements supporting the post-Tiananmen leadership. Zhang has become increasingly active since mid-1991, mostly in commemoration of former colleagues and in connection with defense science and technology events. He also made an unpublicized trip to the Zhuhai Special Economic Zone (SEZ) in January 1992, presumably to show his support for the reforms.

Zhang has a significant number of possible associates from the pre-1949 Third FA period among the elders, including Ye Fei (commander of the 10th Army of the Third FA in 1949), Zhang Zhen (chief of staff of the Third FA in 1949 and currently head of the National Defense University), Li Yaowen (former political commissar of the 26th Corps of the Eighth Army), Fu Kuiqing (a regimental political commissar within the Third FA in 1949), and Wan Haifeng (a regimental commander within the East China Field Army in 1949). Although not generally considered major political figures (and some, such as Ye Fei, are reportedly in very poor health), as a group, they could provide significant support to Zhang Aiping. Their post-1949 careers suggest that they could possibly draw upon military support networks in the Navy (Ye Fei), PLA Military Academy (Zhang Zhen), and Eastern China (Fu Kuiqing, Wan Haifeng, and Li Yaowen).<sup>27</sup> Eastern China may be a very significant potential support base for Zhang, since it served for many years after 1949 as the regional stronghold of the Third FA, and he also served in the region in the early fifties. Of likely greater importance, however, are Zhang's links to the PLA Navy, resulting not only from his ties with former navy leaders such as Ye Fei, but also from his own early role in the development of the service (see the discussion of the Zhang Lianzhong/PLA Navy Faction in Chapter 4).

Overall, however, Zhang Aiping's major core of support is centered in the defense industry and in the military R&D sector. This military sector has had the greatest level of contact with the West, and reportedly places a high value on the potential role of such contacts in China's military modernization efforts. These characteristics, along with numerous career links with elders such as Liu Huaqing and You Taizhong, suggest the basis for a strong alliance between this faction and the Second Field Army/Hong Xuezhi Faction. Moreover, the relatively close pre-1949 relationship between these two FA systems reinforces such ties.<sup>28</sup> The potential importance of such an alliance will be discussed further in Part Five.

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<sup>26</sup>His colleagues included: Ye Fei, Yang Dezhi, Song Shilun, Xiao Ke, Chen Zaidao, and Li Jukui. At least two (Ye and Song, the latter now deceased) are personal associates from the Third FA system. Zhang's motivations in signing such a document are difficult to determine. They probably include a strong aversion to the use of the PLA against Chinese civilians. But some knowledgeable observers have suggested to the author that they may also stem, in part, from Zhang's strong resentment of Deng for being forced into "retirement" before he was ready, a complaint no doubt shared by many other PLA elders outside Deng's personal network.

<sup>27</sup>The listed PLA elder served as either commander or political commissar of each of the listed sectors or regions for a significant number of years after 1949, except for Li Yaowen, who served as deputy political commissar for the Jinan Military Region. The possible presence of continued Third FA-based links with specific military regions will be examined in detail in Chapter 5.

<sup>28</sup>For a discussion of these historical links, see Whitson, 1973, p. 510.

## **YANG DEZHI/BO YIBO AND THE FIFTH (NORTH CHINA) FIELD ARMY SYSTEM**

Yang Dezhi (b.1911) is undoubtedly the dominant figure in this faction. He is widely regarded, along with Zhang Aiping, as one of the most highly esteemed of the PLA elders. His military service spans several field armies, although he is most closely associated with the Fifth (North China) Field Army system. In his early military career, Yang served as a commander of the First Regiment of the First Army Corps under Lin Biao and Nie Rongzhen, fighting against the Nationalists in the Fifth Encirclement Campaign of 1934. The same regiment formed part of the marchers' vanguard during the Long March and participated in several historic engagements. He then commanded the Second Division, in the mid-thirties, which later became the 685th Regiment under the 115th Division of the Eighth Route Army, remaining under Lin and Nie. He advanced eastward in 1939 to establish the Ji-Lu-Yu (Hebei-Shandong-Henan) Base Area, where he remained until the end of the war. This area came under the nominal control of the 129th Division, under Deng Xiaoping and Liu Bocheng.

At the end of the war, Yang moved his troops north, to reinforce Nie Rongzhen's forces. His unit was redesignated the Fourth Column and then the Second Army Group, part of what was to become the Fifth Field Army. By 1949, he was in command of the 19th Army under Nie and Bo Yibo, with Luo Ruiqing as political commissar. From mid-1949 until September 1950, his army was temporarily attached to the First Field Army under Peng Dehuai. Yang spent the early post-1949 years in Korea, as commander of the 19th Army and concurrently chief of staff and deputy commander of the Chinese People's Volunteers (CPV) under Peng Dehuai. After fighting had ceased, Yang then became commander of the CPV. Upon his return to China in 1955, he attended the Advanced Military Institute in Nanjing, and then began a very long period of service as a military region commander. He served as commander of the Jinan Military Region from 1958 to 1973, and then transferred to command the Wuhan Military Region from 1973 to 1979, and the Kunming Military Region from 1979 to 1980. Yang then shifted to Beijing to assist Deng Xiaoping, becoming vice minister of national defense in 1980, while also serving as director of the GSD (from 1980 to 1987), and as a member of the standing committee and deputy secretary-general of the CMC. Since his retirement in 1987, he has been on the standing committee of the CAC.

By most accounts, Yang Dezhi enjoys an extremely high reputation among both professional commanders and political commissars, largely because of his highly successful leadership during major battles of the pre-1949 period and his meritorious service during the Korean War. Even though he eventually came out in support of the Tiananmen crackdown, Yang is still regarded as a professional soldier of integrity and a figure of great stature within the military. His high prestige and influence in the leadership is indicated by the fact that he was already a deputy to the Seventh CCP Congress in 1945, served as a full member of the CCP CC at each party congress from 1956-82, and became a member of the politburo in 1982. The only other senior military figure who rivals him in party seniority is Li Desheng (discussed below).

Despite his apparent high popularity and prestige, Yang Dezhi's past organizational affiliations within the PLA suggest that he enjoys few strong supporters among the elders today. His closest Fifth FA comrades from the wartime period (e.g., Yang Yong, Cui Tianmin, and Su Zhenhua) are dead, and only a few less direct associates such as Bo Yibo (see below) and,

to a lesser extent, Peng Zhen, serve as powerful leaders today.<sup>29</sup> In addition, few former lower ranking cadres of the Fifth FA system hold positions of influence in the current PLA leadership.<sup>30</sup> This is partly explained by the fact that the Fifth FA was deactivated in October 1949, five years before the other field armies. Most of its constituent units were either disbanded or placed directly under PLA Headquarters in Beijing at that time.<sup>31</sup> In addition, many of its former members were removed from positions of party and military power during the Cultural Revolution. Many units of the Fifth FA share a common origin with the Fourth FA, which raises the possibility that Yang Dezhi could enjoy close ties with former veterans of the latter system. However, the internal complexity and diversity of the Fourth FA system, and apparent historical conflicts between the two field armies over personnel appointments, national defense policies, and the distribution of personal power, suggest that Yang probably receives little support from Fourth FA veterans.<sup>32</sup> Finally, Yang is uniformly regarded as an individual lacking in political acumen. This factor, along with his other limitations, indicates that he is probably not a major power player within the politico-military leadership. He probably enjoys a fairly close relationship with Deng, however, as suggested by his pre-1949 career and, more important, his promotion to top PLA posts at the center during the reforms.

Bo Yibo (b.1908) could provide Yang Dezhi with major political contacts outside the Fifth FA system, especially with senior party elders such as Chen Yun. He might also reinforce Yang's links with Deng. Bo served primarily in the economic bureaucracy after 1949, including both the heavy industry and financial sectors. Thus, he has not enjoyed continuous ties with the PLA throughout his career. Indeed, he is usually identified as a veteran civilian party leader and high-level state official. However, he nevertheless is paired with Yang Dezhi because of his very close pre-1949 association with the Fifth FA system.

Bo was imprisoned for political activities during much of his early years with the communist movement (from 1931–36). During the late thirties, he served largely as a party leader in the “white areas,” along with Liu Shaoqi and Peng Zhen. In the early forties, he was a deputy political commissar and administrator in one of the major North China military regions under the command of Deng Xiaoping and Liu Bocheng, concentrating on civil affairs. He first became involved in finance and economics work during this period. After 1949, he continued those duties as minister of finance under the new communist government and as a member of the State Planning Commission from 1952, while also serving as head of the North China Party Bureau. He also became involved in coordinating the work of state organizations responsible for heavy industry and construction. This led to a series of high posts in the industry and communications sector under Li Fuchun. Bo eventually became one of a small group of top economic specialists within the party leadership, including Li Fuchun, Chen Yun, and Li Xiannian, and continued in that capacity until his retirement from formal party and state posts in the early eighties. While identified with conservative views on the economy and a

<sup>29</sup>A third, albeit less likely, elder associate is Wang Chenghan, who served in the 18th Army under Bo.

<sup>30</sup>Among PLA leaders at the center, Xu Xin and Li Xuge are both former Fifth FA cadres possibly associated with Yang Dezhi (see the next chapter). No leading regional officers are former Fifth FA cadres.

<sup>31</sup>Whitson, 1973, p. 354.

<sup>32</sup>Whitson, 1973, p. 262. Two notable exceptions, however, may be Zhang Wannian (Jinan MR commander) and Li Jiulong (Chengdu MR commander). Both are “southern” Fourth FA veterans whom Yang probably promoted to the highest ranks of the regional PLA while commanding the former Wuhan MR. See Chapter 5.

supporter of the Tiananmen crackdown, he is apparently not as ideologically committed to repressive social policies as are Chen Yun and Peng Zhen, much less Wang Zhen.

Bo Yibo's military experience was limited largely to the pre-1949 period. His service during the late forties as a political commissar of units under Deng Xiaoping probably provided an opportunity for the establishment of personal contacts between the two men. However, Bo's links with any other elder (or younger) PLA leader from the Second Field Army are probably not very strong. No surviving Second FA elder other than Deng can be identified as his associate.<sup>33</sup> While some surviving Second FA elders did serve in other military regions under Deng during the forties, it is not known if they established any personal relationships with Bo as a result.<sup>34</sup>

Bo was undoubtedly more closely associated with the Fifth FA system. He was assigned in 1948 as political commissar of the Fifth FA's First Army, under the command of Xu Xiangqian, and subsequently promoted to serve for the remainder of the Civil War as political commissar of the Fifth FA headquarters (also known as the North China Military Command), commanded by Nie Rongzhen. In this capacity, he played a major role in the organization of key Fifth FA campaigns against the Nationalists, especially the Beijing-Tianjin campaign. In addition to Nie Rongzhen, Bo almost certainly had close ties with Yang Dezhi, who served under him as commander of the 19th Army (with Luo Ruiqing as political commissar). He may also have made contacts with PLA elder Wang Chenghan, who served briefly as a Fifth FA division commander under Bo and Nie in the late forties.<sup>35</sup>

Overall, the Fifth Field Army/Bo Yibo Faction can be characterized as having high status within the PLA, but less independent power when compared to the other two major PLA elder factions. However, it could serve as a bridge between other possible factional alliances of party and military elders, or support one over the other in a confrontation. It is probably closest to the Second FA Faction.<sup>36</sup>

#### POSSIBLE "WILD CARDS": LI DESHENG AND WANG ZHEN

Two remaining PLA elders are not affiliated with any of the above groupings, but are nevertheless viewed by many analysts as important figures within the leadership. Li Desheng (b.1916) is a highly respected professional combat commander with extensive service in the Second FA system and the military regions and a history of party leadership since the Cultural Revolution.<sup>37</sup> He spent his entire pre-1949 military career serving as a field commander under Deng Xiaoping and Liu Bocheng, beginning as a platoon leader with the 129th Division of the Eighth Route Army in 1937. He rose through the ranks to become a regiment

<sup>33</sup>Whitson, 1973, p. 168.

<sup>34</sup>For example, Qin Jiwei served as commander of a different military area from the Taiyue Military District where Bo was serving in the early forties. See Whitson, 1973, Chart C, Evolution of the Second Field Army, 1927-1968, between pp. 124-125.

<sup>35</sup>For the listing of both Yang and Wang, see Whitson, 1973, Chart J, North China (Fifth) Field Army Order of Battle, February-October, 1949, between pp. 352-353.

<sup>36</sup>Such possibilities are discussed in greater detail in Chapter 9.

<sup>37</sup>Li's high stature in the regime is indicated by the fact that he was first elected an alternate member of the politburo at the Ninth Party Congress in 1969, and then reelected as a full member during every subsequent congress until the 13th Party Congress of 1987, when he was removed from all his central committee posts as a prelude to his retirement.

commander by 1945, and led the 17th Brigade of the Second Field Army during the Civil War. By 1949, his unit was redesignated the 35th Division of the 12th Corps, under the Third Army commanded by Chen Xilian. Li apparently continued to command the 35th in the Korean War, and was subsequently promoted to deputy commander of the 12th Corps in 1952. He then became its commander in 1955, after the 12th Corps had returned from Korea to the Nanjing MR, and remained in that post until 1968, concurrently holding top positions in the Anhui party and government organs during the late sixties.<sup>38</sup> Li was then promoted from the corps to the regional level, becoming deputy commander of the Nanjing MR from 1968 to 1970. He departed Nanjing in 1970 to serve one year at the center as director of the GPD, before returning to the military region level. He was transferred to the Shenyang MR after a short stint as commander of the Beijing MR from 1971 to 1973. Li led Shenyang for twelve years, from 1973 to 1985, succeeding his former close associate Chen Xilian, who had served as regional commander since 1959. His last formal post was as political commissar of the National Defense University (NDU), which he held until he was pressured into retirement by Deng in 1990. He has been a member of the Standing Committee of the CAC since 1985.

Despite his distinguished service record and reputed power within the regime, however, it is very difficult to determine which party and military elders might be considered Li Desheng's closest associates. His career is a good example of the pitfalls of relying too closely on field army ties as a basis for political alliances, for even though Li Desheng is a former Second FA cadre, he did not retain close ties to Deng Xiaoping. On the contrary, he became associated with radical elements during the Cultural Revolution (beginning with his service within the Nanjing MR), and was ultimately dislodged by Deng as commander of the Shenyang MR in major personnel reshuffles of 1985. He also lost his politburo seat at that time, along with strong critics of Deng's reforms such as Wei Guoqing, then head of the GPD and a veteran of the Third FA system. On the other hand, Li Desheng cooperated with Ye Jianying in the overthrow of the Gang of Four in 1976, and remained commander of the Shenyang MR for many years after the elimination of radical influence throughout most of the military. Moreover, even after he was dislodged from both the Shenyang MR and the politburo, Li was promptly named political commissar of the NDU, not an insignificant post. In addition, as a member of the CAC Standing Committee he most likely attends meetings of the politburo.

The only individual from Deng's Second FA group with whom Li might enjoy close relations is You Taizhong. During the Civil War, You commanded the 16th Brigade when Li commanded the 17th. Li's unit was later redesignated the 35th Division, and You's became the 34th, both under the 12th Corps.<sup>39</sup> After 1949, the two officers continued to move up the ranks together. In April 1954, when the 12th Corps returned to China from Korea, Li was its deputy commander (the unit had no commander then and was led by its political commissar, Li Zhen), while You was commander of the 34th Division. A more likely Second FA associate, however, is Chen Xilian. Chen commanded the Third Army and preceded Li as a long-term commander of the Shenyang MR, as noted above. More important, unlike You Taizhong, Chen was also closely linked to radical elements during the Cultural Revolution, and was eventually forced out of his leadership posts on the party central committee and State Coun-

<sup>38</sup>The 12th Corps eventually became the core of today's 12th Group Army, based in northern Jiangsu.

<sup>39</sup>Whitson, 1973, Chart C, Evolution of the Second Field Army, 1927-68.

cil by Deng in 1980. As noted above, however, Chen Xilian is not generally regarded as an active PLA elder today.<sup>40</sup>

Given the likely absence of any strong links among his peers, many analysts assume that any remaining political influence enjoyed by Li Desheng derives from his relatively long tenure as commander of the Shenyang MR.<sup>41</sup> Others point to his likely impact upon younger professional officers throughout the PLA during his five years as political commissar of the NDU.<sup>42</sup> However, some observers of the Chinese military (including knowledgeable insiders) insist that Li Desheng's influence in the PLA has declined greatly since his removal as commander of the Shenyang MR and retirement as political commissar of the NDU in the late eighties. He may have suffered a stroke in 1989 or 1990 that reduced his capabilities. Personnel shifts involving veteran Shenyang MR cadres indeed suggest that Li may no longer exert great influence within that region, but this cannot be confirmed at present, given existing data limitations (see Chapter 5). More than any other PLA elder, Li Desheng stands as a wild card in the party-military leadership, and thus may be able to tip the balance in a confrontation between elder factions.

The career of Wang Zhen (b.1908) combined continuous military service prior to the mid-fifties as both commander and political commissar within the First FA system (he was named a PLA general in 1955) with subsequent high-level party, state, and PLA posts. Wang led the First FA under former defense minister Peng Dehuai throughout much of the late forties, commanding the First, Second, Fifth, and Sixth Corps of the First FA. As a result, he subsequently developed strong military links in Northwest China, an area initially occupied by the First FA and subsequently run by the PLA. Wang Enmao, the dominant figure in Xinjiang Province after 1949, served under Wang Zhen throughout most of the thirties and forties and the two men marched into the province together in 1949. Wang Zhen later served as deputy commander of the Xinjiang MR under Peng Dehuai (just prior to the Korean War), and then as acting commander and political commissar.

Wang was transferred to leadership posts in Beijing when the central government was consolidated in 1954. Although he served successively as commander and concurrently political commissar of the PLA Railway Corps, deputy director of the GSD, minister of Agriculture and Land Reclamation, CMC standing committee member, and a vice premier of the State Council, Wang never severed his links with the northwest. He was first elected to the central committee as an alternate member in 1945, as a full member in 1956, and as a politburo member in 1978. Although he relinquished his central committee posts in 1982, he at that time became president of the Central Party School. Three years later, he was appointed a vice chairman of the CAC, and then a vice president of the PRC in 1988.

Wang has a stronger ideological tinge than most other senior elders, with the possible exception of Peng Zhen. He has long been a major critic of "bourgeois liberalization,"<sup>43</sup> and was a central figure, along with Chen Yun, Li Xiannian, Peng Zhen, and Bo Yibo, in pushing for Zhao Ziyang's removal as general secretary in the months before Tiananmen. He is also

<sup>40</sup>No other leaders of the 12th Corps survive today.

<sup>41</sup>For example, see *Tangtai*, No. 36, August 4, 1990, pp. 22-23, in *FBIS-CHI*, August 14, 1990, pp. 40-41.

<sup>42</sup>During this period, Li served alongside Third FA elder Zhang Zhen, president of NDU from 1985 to 1990.

<sup>43</sup>Wang joined with Bo Yibo, Peng Zhen, and Chen Yun to demand the removal of Hu Yaobang and the launching of the campaign against "bourgeois liberalization" in 1987.



someone who does not shirk from the use of military force within China. He supported Marshal Ye Jianying's use of the PLA to overthrow the radical Gang of Four in 1976, serving at the time as a crucial intermediary between Ye and more purely civilian colleagues in the top party leadership, such as Chen Yun. Moreover, numerous reports suggest that Wang was a key proponent of the Tiananmen crackdown. He was present on May 19, 1989, when martial law was announced in Beijing, and escorted Li Peng on his visit to martial law troops thereafter. Wang also occupied a high protocol position at Deng's important June 9th meeting with martial law commanders immediately following the armed suppression of demonstrations.<sup>44</sup> After Tiananmen, Wang reportedly advocated expanding and making public internal leadership criticism of Gorbachev's reform policies, as well as more vigorous attempts to purge the CCP of those influenced by Western ideas. He is reportedly on very good terms with Deng Xiaoping, despite his opposition to Zhao.

Aside from his predominant influence within China's northwest, however, Wang's relationship with the PLA as a whole rests more upon his prestige as a former military leader than upon existing strong links to a wide range of top military leaders. This is largely because few senior leaders of the First FA system survive today,<sup>45</sup> and because Wang held no unit command positions after the early fifties. As a former PLA officer put it to the author, "Wang is an elder with considerable informal influence within the military. His opinions must be listened to and respected, but he does not have the kind of nationwide, direct, personal power base enjoyed by Deng Xiaoping and other senior PLA elders." Because of this fact, Wang usually defers to Deng's judgment on most matters, while also attempting to support Chen Yun when possible. In short, he is something of a "weather vane," with a clear penchant for repression. This suggests that he could join a conservative alliance with the Chen Yun/Peng Zhen Grouping in a post-Deng setting.

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<sup>44</sup>Byrnes, 1990, pp. 142-143.

<sup>45</sup>Xiao Ke is one remaining military elder who served with Wang Zhen in the pre-Liberation period. He commanded the Sixth Corps of the Second Front Army when Wang was political commissar in the thirties. Xiao then transferred to the Fifth (North China) FA system (serving under Nie Rongzhen), and finally to the Fourth FA system under Lin Biao in the late forties. Xiao also worked under Wang in the fifties, in the state bureaucracy. But the importance of any links to Xiao is discounted by the fact that the PLA elder is reportedly not in good health, and is not considered a major powerholder among the elders. Yu Qiuli also served in the First FA, although not under Wang Zhen. Another notable surviving First FA elder is Xi Zhongxun.

#### **4. THE FORMAL LEADERSHIP: PARTY AND MILITARY FACTIONS AT THE CENTER**

While the elders exercise ultimate power in China, a younger group of leaders now occupies most formal positions of authority in the party, state, and military hierarchy at the center and in China's military regions. It is the interaction between this second generation of leaders and the remaining elders that will determine the major lines of political development in China during the next 5 to 10 years. Indeed many of these "younger" leaders serve as crucial supporters for the elder factions described in the previous chapter.

This chapter focuses on the formal party and military leadership at the center (the following chapter examines the regional military leadership). The first half of the chapter assesses possible factional relationships among those few civilian party leaders identified as leading candidates for the succession. It especially addresses their general connections to the military and to the remaining elders. The second part of the chapter focuses on the formal PLA leadership in Beijing, identifying likely factional affiliations and links to the specific elder factions presented in the previous chapter.

#### **THE SUCCESSOR PARTY LEADERSHIP**

The Tiananmen crisis precipitated the final collapse of a post-Mao party leadership structure that had provided a certain level of regime stability during much of the reform period, but had been increasingly challenged following the ouster of Hu Yaobang in 1987. That structure was composed of two major groups of leaders: reformers who were more attentive to practical economic issues and government matters than to questions of ideology and party control, and more orthodox, anti-Mao planners who valued economic control and political order over experimentation linked to political and social change.

Originally forged through a common desire to oppose any return to the radicalism of the Cultural Revolution and to concentrate on China's economic modernization, this leadership alliance was based more on a "never again" attitude toward Maoist excesses than on a common commitment to shared, positive goals. As a consequence, it was always somewhat precarious and ultimately dependent upon Deng's prestige and personal influence. Thus, as the fear of a return to Maoist radicalism receded and the challenges and pressures of economic and social problems and the impending leadership succession mounted, tensions between these two leadership groups grew, making Deng's job increasingly difficult. This post-Mao leadership structure eventually came to an end when the core of the reformers, led by General Secretary Zhao Ziyang, was removed from power during the Tiananmen crisis. This event also marked the collapse of Deng Xiaoping's carefully prepared succession arrangements. In two and a half years, both of Deng's designated successors (Hu Yaobang and Zhao Ziyang) were gone.

The new, designated successor leadership that emerged after Tiananmen purports to be a unified, collective group, but is actually highly unstable, mired in the politics of personal factionalism and the struggle for power. Two general factions form the core of the contending formal party leadership, each vitally dependent upon the backing of a powerful party elder. One is led by Party General Secretary Jiang Zemin, and the other by State Council Premier

Li Peng. Both men are members of the PBSC, along with Li Ruihuan, Yao Yilin, Song Ping, and Qiao Shi. Jiang was chosen by Deng Xiaoping after the Tiananmen crisis to form the core of the next generation of party leaders, replacing deposed party head Zhao Ziyang. He was probably a compromise candidate, however, acceptable to most elders as a nonthreatening, malleable figure willing to follow orders and avoid extreme policy positions. However, Jiang's faction is usually associated with a more liberal line in economic development, particularly as expressed by fellow PBSC member Li Ruihuan. Lower-level supporters probably include Vice Premier Zhu Rongji, as well as Vice Premier Tian Jiyun and politburo member (and State Councillor) Li Tieying, all strong advocates of reform and links to the West. Other possible Jiang supporters are State Planning Commissioner Zou Jiahua and former Guangdong Governor Ye Xuanping. Premier Li Peng is backed principally by key elder conservatives such as Chen Yun, and is supported by PBSC members Yao Yilin and Song Ping, although the latter two figures may both lose their seats at the upcoming 14th Party Congress. Li also may enjoy the support of hardline elders such as Wang Zhen and Peng Zhen, as well as ideologues within the party propaganda apparatus who regained positions of influence after Tiananmen. Li Peng's faction is most closely associated with a more conservative, orthodox approach to economic reform and development, favoring enhanced party involvement in the economy and society, the revived use of past political control measures, and a limited reassertion of central direction over the economy.

The remaining member of the PBSC, Qiao Shi, is not clearly identified with either faction, but has become an increasingly strong supporter of Deng Xiaoping in recent months and undoubtedly exerts considerable influence within the top echelons of the power structure, largely through his links to the party intelligence and security apparatus and the party's political and legal affairs system. He is also head of the discipline inspection commission of the party central committee and president of the party school. A final individual worth noting is He Pengfei, a leading figure among the so-called Princelings Party (*Taizi Dang*), composed of sons and daughters of senior Chinese officials. Although not yet a top party leader, He is sometimes viewed by informed analysts as a serious contender for the succession.

What most distinguishes this emerging leadership structure from past groupings, and of greatest significance to the possible future role of the military in a succession struggle, is the fact that none of the above individuals possess the broad political contacts, administrative capabilities, vision, and overall prestige of original revolutionary leaders such as Mao Zedong, Zhou Enlai, or Deng Xiaoping. More important, all of the leading candidates for the succession lack the sort of strong, direct military ties that will likely prove essential to their survival in a post-Deng setting, although a few, such as Zou Jiahua, Ye Xuanping, and the less senior He Pengfei, enjoy influence within limited circles of the PLA.

Over the short term, this means that Deng Xiaoping's paramount role in the regime remains essential, despite his efforts to establish some level of independent authority for individuals such as Jiang Zemin. He continues to serve as the supreme arbiter and balancer of the political system. At the same time, however, Deng retains strong convictions about the necessity of China's modernization and the need to maintain an emphasis on practical development issues over ideological debate. This has often led him to tilt toward Jiang Zemin in an effort to curb the conservatives' recurring propaganda attacks against bourgeois liberalization in favor of a reemphasis on reform and a more pragmatic policy course. In supporting Jiang as general secretary, Deng has repeatedly identified him as "the core of the third generation of

leaders" (the first being led by Mao and the second by Deng), and urged that a unified leadership be built around him. In contrast, reports persist of Deng's unhappiness with Li Peng, but the unpopular premier remains on the job. There are even indications that certain conservative elders have referred to Li as a "second core" in the leadership, thus suggesting the extent to which Deng's preferences may be under challenge.

In the immediate aftermath of Tiananmen, senior party conservatives sought to deflect Deng's moderating efforts. They apparently believe the subordinating of ideological issues to the goal of economic modernization should be permanently halted, since it could again result in challenges to the predominance of the party. Deng fears, however, that conservative opposition to moderation could again pull the system apart, leading him to repeatedly warn against the dangers of factionalism and disunity. Beginning in late 1990, reformers were able to use such concerns to counter the efforts of conservatives and again stress the primary importance of professional criteria and practical results in pursuing party rectification and economic development. By spring 1991, Deng apparently decided to challenge further the hardliners in the leadership by securing the promotion of Zhu Rongji and Zou Jiahua to the post of vice premier. These were the first significant personnel changes made since those taken immediately after Tiananmen.

Deng may be seeking to position Zhu to succeed Li Peng, thus taking over the role intended for Li Ruihuan. Deng probably originally desired to place Li as premier after Tiananmen, but the former mayor of Tianjin has apparently alienated many conservatives and shown himself to be a relatively ineffectual PBSC member. As a first step toward the premiership, Zhu has already obtained considerable influence over economic policy (see below), in response to Deng's growing dissatisfaction over the central leadership's failure to move forward with bolder economic reforms.

Although Zou Jiahua is regarded by many as the choice of the hardliners to balance Zhu Rongji, it is more likely that he is intended by Deng to play a role in the State Council as an additional challenger to Li Peng and Yao Yilin. His background and general views on development do not unambiguously suggest that he is a supporter of conservative central planning and doctrinal orthodoxy. He may thus stand as a possible "second choice" to Zhu, more acceptable to hardliners as a replacement for Li Peng, should Deng encounter strong resistance to an attempt to promote Zhu to the top state post.<sup>1</sup> Perhaps even more important, Zou is one of the few leading contenders for the succession who possesses significant ties, by both marriage and bureaucratic experience, to important elements of the Chinese military (see below).

In the spring of 1991, Deng Xiaoping also took action in specific policy areas to undermine the position of conservatives opposing further economic reform. Taking advantage of the jarring impact of the Gulf War in reaffirming Chinese technological backwardness, Deng launched a campaign to stress the importance of science and technology in the modern world, thus countering conservative attempts since Tiananmen to continuously assert the primacy

<sup>1</sup>For discussions of the promotions of Zhu and Zou, see Tai Ming Cheung, "The Wind Changes," *Far Eastern Economic Review (FEER)*, April 18, 1991, pp. 12-13, and *Tanqitai*, No. 1, April 15, 1991, p. 6, translated in *FBIS-CHI*, April 18, 1991, pp. 20-21.

of Marxist thought in policy.<sup>2</sup> This was followed, in late 1991 and throughout much of 1992, by additional efforts by Deng to accelerate the pace of economic reforms, including appeals to the PLA for greater support. To symbolize his personal concern for reform and his continued capability to support its further development, Deng paid a personal inspection visit to Southern China in January 1992. This precipitated public expressions of support for reform (and for Deng) by the PLA and other institutions, and by key military leaders such as Yang Baibing (see below).

Together, such personnel and policy measures have tilted the pendulum back toward moderation in party policies and leadership orientation. Deng undoubtedly hopes to use this shift to push through major personnel changes at the upcoming 14th Party Congress, centering on the inclusion of more reformers into the politburo and politburo standing committee, and the removal of leading conservatives or ineffectual leaders such as Li Peng, Yao Yilin, Song Ping, and Wan Li. But no such shift in the balance of forces among the successor leadership has yet occurred. The heightened influence of conservative elders since Tiananmen continues to pose major obstacles to any attempt by Deng to establish a less divided, more credible successor regime.

The remainder of this section examines the backgrounds of the current leading contenders for the succession, including information on their tenuous military links and their possible personal relationships with specific central PLA leaders and elder factions.

### **Jiang Zemin**

Jiang Zemin (b.1926) is a technical cadre whose career background has been limited almost entirely to the state industrial sector. Trained as an electrical engineer in the late forties, Jiang served as a section chief in several Shanghai light industrial factories before receiving further technical education in the Stalin Automobile Plant in 1955–56. After returning to China, he held a series of positions as a leading engineering cadre within several factories and institutes in Shanghai and Wuhan attached to the First Ministry of Machine Building Industry. He then served as deputy director and director of the Foreign Affairs Bureau of the same ministry from 1974 to 1979 before advancing to more prominent economic posts under the reforms, including secretary general of the State Import and Export Control Commission and minister of the Electronics Industry. He was first elected to the party central committee in 1982. In 1986, Jiang was appointed mayor of Shanghai and in the following year became secretary of the Shanghai Municipal Party Committee and member of the politburo. He was elected a member of the politburo standing committee and party general secretary at the Fourth Plenum of the 13th Central Committee in June 1989, immediately following the Tiananmen incident.

Jiang's career suggests that he lacks many of the essential attributes needed to consolidate his position and remain atop the power structure following Deng Xiaoping's death. He does not have the breadth and depth of job experience in the party, state, and military apparatus that would have allowed him to develop the network of personal associations essential to the creation of an independent power base. Moreover, by most accounts he is not a particularly

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<sup>2</sup>See "Deng Launches Science Campaign to Promote Reform," *FBIS Trends*, Washington: Foreign Broadcast Information Service, May 30, 1991, pp. 42–46.

competent leader, in terms of basic administrative skills and the ability to devise policy programs capable of dealing with China's enormous problems. Those Chinese familiar with Jiang's career view him largely as a political opportunist who has been able to read and respond to the shifting political winds.

Deng Xiaoping relinquished his long-held post as chairman of the CMC to Jiang Zemin in November 1989 as part of his attempt to strengthen Jiang's position as the "core" of the successor leadership. However, Jiang's ties to the Chinese military are not strong. On the personal side, he may enjoy some indirect links to Zhang Aiping and the Third FA system, through his uncle and adoptive father Jiang Shanqing. The elder Jiang died a martyr in 1939, while working under Zhang Aiping. When a new tombstone was erected for him in 1982, Zhang wrote the inscription. It is therefore possible that Jiang Zemin was raised under the care of the New Fourth Army, the precursor to the Third FA.<sup>3</sup> On the professional side, Jiang's links to the PLA rest almost entirely upon his work in the area of military-related telecommunications within the Ministry of Machine Building Industry and the Ministry of Electronics Industry. These activities allowed him to establish some limited contacts with the Third Department of the GSD, responsible for technology in the CMC.<sup>4</sup>

Reports began to appear in the Hong Kong media in mid-1990 that Jiang Zemin, as CMC chairman, was attempting to strengthen his weak links with the military, particularly with some of the senior commanders and "retired" PLA leaders, while generally portraying himself as supportive of professional military interests. He reportedly met in August 1990 with about 20 PLA elders in an attempt to obtain their backing, and has also reportedly made concerted efforts to court supposed "moderates" such as Liu Huaqing, Qin Jiwei, and Chi Haotian. Some knowledgeable journalists and former PLA officers maintain that Jiang has indeed received the support of these key military heads, as well as several retired PLA elders.<sup>5</sup> In fact, some observers insist that Jiang is especially close to Chi Haotian.

However, current and former PLA officers located in the central military departments in Beijing insist that Jiang's overall links to the PLA remain very weak. Such insiders repeatedly stress that, as with previous party general secretaries Hua Guofeng and Zhao Ziyang, Jiang Zemin is still regarded by the military leadership as an outsider undeserving of their unequivocal trust and support.<sup>6</sup> They point out that even Zhao Ziyang, who eventually managed to earn some PLA support and served as first vice chairman of the CMC, was refused entry to many military units and departments without the prior authorization of either Deng Xiaoping or Yang Shangkun.

Jiang Zemin could conceivably increase his standing among at least one segment of the PLA by establishing ties with Yang Shangkun and Yang Baibing. Although his relationship with the Yangs remains a subject of great controversy among analysts, the preponderance of informed opinion assumes either actual or strong potential conflict between at least Yang

<sup>3</sup>The author is indebted to an unnamed Hong Kong source for this information.

<sup>4</sup>See *Tungtai*, No. 22, April 28, 1990, pp. 12-13, translated in *FBIS-CHI*, May 4, 1990, pp. 23-25.

<sup>5</sup>For example, see Tai Ming Cheung, "Gun-Barrel Politics," *FEER*, January 17, 1990, pp. 16-17.

<sup>6</sup>One PLA officer interviewed by the author stated that Jiang's efforts to court the PLA by visiting military commands around the country and speaking in support of military interests were regarded within the PLA as "just a lot of hot air, prompting more laughter than respect."

Baibing and Jiang, and discounts the latter's ability to survive long after Deng's death.<sup>7</sup> Most observers therefore view Jiang as a transitional figure similar to Hua Guofeng, Mao's doomed successor ousted by Deng in the early eighties. If Jiang Zemin does maintain power following Deng's passing from the scene, it will probably be as a front for other far more powerful figures in the party and military, perhaps those opposed to the Yangs.

### Li Peng

The career background of the current premier of the State Council greatly resembles that of Jiang Zemin. Li Peng (b.1928) also received early training as a technical cadre, although in the area of power generation rather than electrical engineering. After initial service as a technician in companies located in North China, Li spent several years, from 1948 to 1954, as a student at the Moscow Power Institute. After returning to China, he held a series of leading engineering posts in power plants and factories in North and Northeast China, eventually becoming head of the Beijing Electric Power Administration from 1966 to 1980. As with Jiang, he was promoted to more notable economic posts during the reforms, serving first as vice minister and minister of Power Industry from 1979 to 1982 and then as first vice minister of Water Conservancy and Power from 1982 to 1983. Li became a vice premier in 1983 and was elected to the politburo and party secretariat in 1985. He was then promoted to the politburo standing committee at the 13th Party Congress and also became acting premier of the state council in 1987. He became premier in 1988 and concurrently serves as the head of the State Commission for Economic Restructuring. He also plays a leading role in directing China's foreign policy.

As with Jiang Zemin, Li Peng is considered by many informed observers to be a man of modest administrative abilities. Many knowledgeable observers believe that Li rose through the party and state hierarchy largely by virtue of his stature as the adopted son of the late Premier Zhou Enlai and the personal support of powerful patrons, particularly Chen Yun. He has exhibited some level of acumen as the primary implementer of Deng's post-Tiananmen foreign policy and appears to be more skilled than Jiang Zemin at political infighting. Yet most analysts believe Li Peng is incapable of commanding the loyalties of a successor leadership, even in the unlikely event that he survives the party general secretary. In addition to his narrow background as a state economic cadre, he is not clearly associated with a significant number of regional leaders. More important, Li is closely associated with the violence of 1989. By first opposing pro-democracy demonstrations in 1986-87 and then serving as the key public figure behind the suppression of the Tiananmen protestors and the subsequent economic retrenchment and political repression, Li Peng has become the major symbol of rigid authoritarianism and a return to the past, despite his recent attempts to appear as a moderate figure.

Equally important, nothing in Li Peng's career as a technical cadre and state official suggests any significant connections to the military. Moreover, as we have seen, his major elder patron, Chen Yun, also has few strong PLA ties. One of the very few references to possible PLA

<sup>7</sup>Details on Yang Baibing's relationship with Jiang Zemin are provided below, in the section on the central PLA leadership.

support for Li appeared in March 1991, in a Hong Kong publication.<sup>8</sup> It stated that Li Peng is receiving support from the more conservative elder leaders of the PLA because he is maintaining a tough attitude in dealing with the pro-democracy groups and others associated with the Tiananmen demonstrations. While plausible, no additional information has emerged to substantiate such a claim.

Li Peng's relationship with Yang Baibing is poorly understood. Given their shared association with more conservative views and Li Peng's extremely poor links to the military, one might expect that the two leaders would become allies in the struggle for power. However, there is virtually no evidence to suggest such an alliance. Li Peng has made no attempt to court either Yang or any other leading member of the military. The absence of such a link might be due to Yang Baibing's desire to maintain distance from a leader whom many informed Chinese view as mortally wounded politically by his close association with Tiananmen. It may also reflect Yang's apparent desire to discard his hardline reputation in favor of a more moderate policy line, evident in his activities during 1992 (see below). Any prior association with Li Peng would obviously stand as a major obstacle to such a move. Without further information on the Yang-Li relationship, however, such notions will remain purely speculative.

Finally, Premier Li Peng could possibly gain some influence within the PLA by obtaining the support of Zou Jiahua (discussed below). The two leaders may be linked through common technical study in Moscow during the late forties and early fifties, and because of their leading posts in the State Council. This is extremely unlikely, however, given Zou's probable reformist affiliations. Overall, Li Peng's influence within a divided leadership and his value to the regime are highly limited. Despite his current stature as the primary rival to Jiang Zemin in the successor leadership, he is probably marking time until he is removed, probably after the death of Chen Yun, either by Deng Xiaoping or by other remaining members of the party-military elite.

### **Yao Yilin and Song Ping**

These two older members of the politburo standing committee are the same age (b.1917) and also display very similar general backgrounds, capabilities, and political influence. With long experience in the central planning apparatus, they are both major forces behind the conservative emphasis on greater central economic control, and are also close to elder Chen Yun, the patriarch of the Chinese financial system.

Yao in particular has served as Li Peng's formulator of economic policy and has probably been the brains behind most of the Premier's utterances on the topic. However, Yao's overall involvement in directing economic policy has apparently declined since 1991. This has been partly due to poor health. It may also be a response to Deng's strong criticism of the leadership's failure to implement more far-reaching reform policies. Outside the planning apparatus, Yao does not enjoy significant support, and rarely speaks out on noneconomic matters,

<sup>8</sup>*Kaifang*, March 15, 1991, pp. 6-8, translated in Joint Publications Research Service, *JPRS-CAR*, July 29, 1991, pp. 84-86.



other than to echo utterances on politics and ideology made by other conservatives.<sup>9</sup> In contrast, Song Ping has considerable experience in the field of party organization and some apparent ties with the PLA.<sup>10</sup> Both these factors, and his connection to Chen Yun through the planning system, no doubt account for his elevation to the politburo standing committee in the wake of Tiananmen.

Despite their somewhat impressive credentials, Song Ping and Yao Yilin are extremely unlikely successors, however. Both lack strong political ambition and are relatively advanced in age. These facts, when combined with Yao's additional, above-mentioned limitations, generally preclude them as major contenders for the succession. Most analysts expect that both men will step down from the PBSC at the 14th Party Congress.

### Qiao Shi

Qiao Shi (b.1924) has served as a state official and as a high-level cadre in various party committees and economic organs, suggesting a similar background to other putative successors such as Jiang Zemin and Li Peng.<sup>11</sup> A key difference, however, has been his extensive work in the area of party security and intelligence. From 1963 to 1983, Qiao served as a security cadre within the International Liaison Department of the party central committee, eventually becoming head of the department. His success in such duties apparently led to his election as a full member of the 12th Central Committee in 1982 and an alternate member of the party secretariat. Qiao then went on to higher posts within the central committee apparatus, serving as director of its general office in 1983 and 1984, head of its organization department in 1984 and 1985, secretary of its political and legal affairs committee from 1985 to the present, and secretary and standing committee member of its DIC from 1987 to the present. In each area, Qiao presumably continued to direct important internal party security and intelligence activities. He was elected to the politburo and the party secretariat in 1985, appointed a vice premier in 1986, and was elevated to the politburo standing committee at the 13th Party Congress.

Qiao Shi's lack of any clear personal ties to specific leaders and his low profile as a security cadre have in the past led some outside analysts to believe that he is a somewhat passive,

<sup>9</sup>Yao's career background includes a history of involvement in regional propaganda work during the thirties and early forties, followed by service as a leading party official and industrial cadre in North and Northeast China until 1949. From that point on, Yao's responsibilities focused almost exclusively upon finance and trade work within leading state and party organs. He became secretary-general of the Finance and Economics Commission and head of the State Planning Commission in 1979. He was then elevated to the politburo and party secretariat in the eighties and became a member of the PBSC at the 13th Party Congress in 1987.

<sup>10</sup>Song held a series of organizational and secretarial posts in various propaganda and party research organs during the thirties and forties. He entered the economic bureaucracy in the early fifties, however, and was especially active in planning and party affairs organs responsible for policy in the northwest. These latter duties served as a basis for contacts with the Lanzhou Military Region, where Song served as first secretary of the Gansu Provincial Party Committee and concurrently second political commissar of the Lanzhou MR in the late seventies and early eighties. Song's subsequent postings were with the State Planning Commission and the Organization Department of the CCP Central Committee (he served as head of the former organ in 1983-87, and head of the latter in 1987-90). He became a member of the PBSC in June 1989.

<sup>11</sup>After attending a university in East China and serving as a party secretary within several middle schools in the same region, Qiao held a series of leadership posts in the youth and united front sectors of various party organs during the late forties and early fifties. He then served from 1954 to 1962 as head of the technical and design departments of two North China iron and steel companies and secretary of the party committee in an engineering office in Shaanxi.

neutral figure in the top leadership. However, it is clear that Qiao is much more than a marginal player or a pliant tool of other figures. His long career in the security and intelligence apparatus of the party central committee and his resulting access to the personnel dossiers of the leadership undoubtedly give him considerable influence within the regime. One indication of his importance emerged at the time of the Tiananmen crisis in June 1989. When the other members of the politburo standing committee were locked in internal struggle involving Deng and the other elders, Qiao Shi appeared in public to convey an image of calmness and control.<sup>12</sup> Moreover, since Tiananmen and particularly in 1992, Qiao has shown himself to be a strong supporter of Deng Xiaoping. During the immediate post-Tiananmen period, his few public statements generally avoided reference to the standard litany of conservative slogans and positions.<sup>13</sup> Since late 1991, he has spoken out more directly in support of Deng's efforts to accelerate the reform effort. These points suggest that he is no longer a neutral figure in the leadership, if he ever had been.<sup>14</sup>

Despite his strengths, as with the other leading contenders for the succession, Qiao Shi has few if any direct ties to the regular PLA. He undoubtedly interacts regularly with those high-level military officers who serve under him on the central committee's DIC (e.g., Lanzhou MR Political Commissar Cao Pengsheng). More important, perhaps, his lengthy service as head of the political and legal affairs apparatus of the party central committee might give him considerable influence over the PAP, since that apparatus holds central responsibility for party activities within the PAP. Indeed, before Tiananmen, Qiao Shi apparently directed party affairs within all domestic security organs. Since June 1989, however, his influence over the PAP in particular has been somewhat diluted through various organizational changes.<sup>15</sup> Yet he still remains an influential figure within domestic security organs, and could prove to be very influential in a future internal crisis. Moreover, Qiao's expertise in security work could make him attractive to military leaders as a possible alternative to technocrats and state cadres such as Jiang Zemin, Li Peng, Tian Jiyun, Li Tieying, and other younger civilian leaders. Some outside analysts have suggested that he could be elevated to the CMC after the upcoming 14th Party Congress, which would be an unprecedented action.<sup>16</sup>

### Li Ruihuan

The youngest member of the politburo standing committee, Li Ruihuan (b.1934), has a reputation as a pragmatic, independent-minded individual with a very direct, no-nonsense style of leadership and a reputation for getting the job done. Unlike his younger colleagues on the

<sup>12</sup>At the time, this led some analysts to incorrectly assert that Qiao had been selected as Zhao Ziyang's replacement as party general secretary.

<sup>13</sup>For example, see Qiao's address to a National Conference on Procuratorial, Judicial, and Public Security Work in spring 1990, translated in *FBIS-CHI*, March 7, 1990, pp. 24-25.

<sup>14</sup>A very knowledgeable Hong Kong source indicated to the author in a personal conversation that the editor of the pro-reform, English language newspaper *China Daily* is related to Qiao Shi by marriage. This source suggested that Qiao Shi provided the necessary support for the paper when it began publication during the height of the reform period.

<sup>15</sup>See Chapter 6 for details on the relation of the political and legal affairs committee to the PAP and the changes implemented in PAP command and control since Tiananmen.

<sup>16</sup>No civilian party leader below the level of party chairman or general secretary has ever been elected to the CMC.

PBSC, Li is not an educated technocrat. He was trained as a carpenter and served in the sixties and early seventies as a party cadre in several construction and building materials companies in Beijing. He then went on to serve as a vice chairman of the Beijing Municipal Construction Commission and director general of the Beijing capital construction project headquarters, in the middle and late seventies. In 1976–77, he reportedly impressed many members of the top leadership by his efficient management of the construction of Mao Zedong's mausoleum. During the initial years of the reforms, Li held leading posts in the China Youth League and the All-China Youth Federation, but soon entered higher government and party organs within his native Tianjin. He rose rapidly through a series of top posts in the municipal party organs and city government, becoming mayor of Tianjin and secretary of the municipal party committee in 1983. He was first elected a member of the party central committee in 1982, and was elected a member of the politburo in 1987. He became a member of the PBSC and the party secretariat immediately after Tiananmen, at the Fourth Plenum in June 1989. As mayor of Tianjin during Tiananmen, Li had gained the attention of the elder leadership (and perhaps Deng in particular) by the adept manner in which he kept the lid on student demonstrations.

Since Tiananmen, Li has taken primary responsibility for party propaganda and ideology work. In this capacity, he has reportedly alienated many conservatives by not cooperating in their attempts to present a strong regime stance emphasizing the importance of communist doctrine for economic policy. Despite his relative pragmatism and general support for reform, however, Li has not shown himself to be a major contender for the succession, as some outside analysts had initially expected. He remains severely restricted by his lack of a broadly based political foundation and his absence of a proven ability to formulate policy programs. Perhaps most important, he apparently does not enjoy any links to the Chinese military. As a result, Li Ruihuan is increasingly viewed by both Chinese and foreign observers as a marginal player in leadership politics, although still a clear symbol of Dengist reform.

### Zou Jiahua

Currently a member of the party central committee and a vice premier, Zou Jiahua (b.1926) is regarded by many analysts as one of the leading candidates for elevation to the politburo or the politburo standing committee at the upcoming 14th Party Congress. As with Li Peng, Jiang Zemin, and other technical cadres of the successor generation, Zou studied engineering in Moscow during the early fifties. He then worked as an engineer and factory director in the Northeast and as a director of a research institute within the First Ministry of Machine Building Industry in Beijing. By the late seventies, Zou had entered the defense sector, serving until the early eighties as deputy director of the NDIO under the State Council. He then held several leadership posts within other key government organs responsible for military modernization, including deputy director of the Commission on Science, Technology and Industry for National Defense (COSTIND),<sup>17</sup> minister of Ordnance Industry, and head of the Ministry of Machine Building and Electronics, prior to becoming director of the State

<sup>17</sup>COSTIND was formed in 1982 by merging its predecessor, the Commission on Science and Technology for National Defense, with the NDIO, responsible for defense industrial production within the numbered machine building industries. See Pollack, 1992, p. 173.

Planning Commission in late 1989. Zou played a major role in introducing reforms in the defense industry, particularly the conversion of military plants to civilian production, and is reportedly a strong proponent of the application of advanced foreign technologies to the military sector. He was named an alternate member of the party central committee in 1977, and became a full member at the 12th Party Congress in 1982. He was elected a vice premier in April 1991.

Zou Jiahua enjoys the closest ties to the PLA of any member of the current successor leadership. In addition to his extensive career in the defense sector, Zou was placed in the care of the New Fourth Army after the death in 1944 of his father Zou Taofen, a revolutionary journalist who worked closely with the communists and was posthumously made a party member. Thus, both his professional and early personal experiences with the PLA suggest that Zou's primary military ties are with the Zhang Aiping/Third FA Faction and other leaders directly associated with defense modernization. These undoubtedly include Ding Henggao, son-in-law of Nie Rongzhen, current COSTIND director, and a previous work associate, as well as with other leading figures within COSTIND. Zou is also associated with the Second FA elders and Hong Xuezhai, however. He served directly under Hong when the latter was NDIO head in the late seventies. He also reportedly had contacts with Liu Huaqing in the late sixties, when Liu served as a deputy director of the Commission on Science and Technology for National Defense. In addition to these personal and professional links to the Third and Second FA systems, Zou also has strong marriage-based ties to a highly revered PLA professional commander. His wife is the daughter of Ye Jianying, a former marshal of the PRC and a leading military strongman during much of the seventies.<sup>18</sup> His brother-in-law is thus Ye Xuanping, son of the late marshal, former governor of Guangdong Province, and the only other member of the party leadership with significant PLA ties (see below).

Although often regarded as a compromise figure acceptable to both the reformers and the conservatives, Zou is believed to favor the use of market-oriented measures and is also reportedly on good terms with Jiang Zemin. Moreover, both men share common links with the Third FA system and Zhang Aiping, and both were New Fourth Army "orphans," as we have seen. Hence, Zou could become a very useful ally for the party general secretary in his attempts to garner greater PLA support during a post-Deng succession struggle. Alternatively, although less likely, Zou might throw his support to Li Peng, providing the premier with a much needed link to the military.

### **Zhu Rongji**

Currently favored by many informed analysts as a leading candidate for promotion to the politburo standing committee and a possible replacement for Li Peng as premier,<sup>19</sup> Vice Premier Zhu Rongji (b.1928) is a former long-term industrial cadre, mayor of Shanghai, and a very strong proponent of reform. As with many other reformist leaders, Zhu began his

<sup>18</sup>In September 1955, Mao Zedong personally conferred the title of Marshal of the PRC on ten leading generals or ex-generals of the PLA: Zhu De, Peng Dehuai, Lin Biao, Liu Bocheng, He Long, Chen Yi, Luo Renghuan, Xu Xiangqian, Nie Rongzhen, and Ye Jianying. See John Gittings, *The Role of the Chinese Army*, London: Oxford University Press, 1967, p. 155.

<sup>19</sup>See, for example, the article by Willy Wo-Lap Lam on Zhu Rongji appearing in *South China Morning Post (SCMP)*, June 12, 1992, pp. 1, 12, in *FBIS-CHI*, June 12, 1992, p. 15, and Nicholas D. Kristoff, "No Praise Please! He Has Prospects," *The New York Times*, August 25, 1992.

party and state career as a technocrat and leading official in the central industrial bureaucracy. After graduating with an engineering degree from Qinghua University in 1951, Zhu served during the fifties, sixties, and seventies as a central planner, first as deputy division chief in the State Planning Commission from 1952 to 1975, and then as a leading engineer within the Ministry of Petroleum Industry until 1978. At the beginning of the reform period, he was promoted to become director of the Institute of Industrial Economics under the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS), and then joined the State Economic Commission in 1979, becoming a deputy director in 1983. During this period, Zhu gained the attention of the top leadership for his steadfast promotion of reform, and was subsequently chosen to serve as a top official in Shanghai, becoming deputy secretary of the municipal party committee (and an alternate member of the party central committee) in 1987 and mayor of Shanghai the following year. He became Shanghai municipal party secretary in August 1989, replacing Jiang Zemin, and was selected as a vice premier in April 1991, along with Zou Jiahua. In June 1992, he was also appointed director of the newly established Economic and Trade Office (ETO) of the State Council, intended by Deng to serve as a mechanism for accelerating the economic reform effort.

While mayor of Shanghai, Zhu was able to attract increased amounts of central resources to China's largest city, while developing a reputation as a tough, uncompromising administrator highly respected by foreigners. He also showed considerable sympathy for the views of economic reformists by speaking out strongly, after Tiananmen, in favor of continuing the open door policy, and has gained support from some pro-democracy elements because of his moderate stance toward Shanghai demonstrators during the protests of spring 1989 and his subsequent attempts to shield Shanghai intellectuals from the conservative crackdown of 1989-90. His considerable capability in dealing with foreigners, as well as his apparent popularity in Western circles as an open-minded leader, may work against Zhu, however, given the strong opposition to outside interference and general xenophobic strain evident in the Chinese political system.

Nevertheless, Zhu has reportedly maintained some support among conservatives in the leadership, largely by favoring greater development of the lower Yangtze River Valley over the southern coastal zones. He also appears to have won the grudging admiration of many suspicious elder leaders by successfully resolving many of the hundreds of billions of *Renminbi* in so-called debt chains existing among state-owned enterprises since he became a vice premier.<sup>20</sup> Indeed, Zhu's resulting appointment as head of the ETO suggests that he may attain predominant influence over the reform process, at the expense of conservatives such as Li Peng, Yao Yilin, and Song Ping.

However, Zhu's major weakness is his apparently nonexistent links with the military. This suggests that, despite his relative competence and drive, he may need to establish a strong alliance with an individual such as Zou Jiahua in order to establish some credibility with the PLA as a viable successor. Yet Zou could also become his major rival in the future as an alternative figure to Li Peng.

<sup>20</sup>Debt chains consist of interlocking structures of government debt amassed by producers, distributors, and retailers under the reforms.

### **Tian Jiyun**

Vice Premier Tian Jiyun (b.1929) is a veteran cadre of the finance and economics system of the state bureaucracy, with extensive service as a leading party and state cadre in the southwest. He became secretary-general and vice premier of the State Council in 1983 and also served as deputy head of the Central Financial and Economics Leading Group. In 1982, he was elevated to the party central committee and then elected a member of the politburo and the party secretariat in 1985, largely through the support of Deng Xiaoping and Zhao Ziyang. Tian was brought to Beijing during the early eighties by Zhao, and is viewed as a strong proponent of the economic reforms and a critic of excessive central planning. Although very intelligent, he is not highly educated, and is regarded as very cautious in political matters. His continued success following the downfall of Zhao Ziyang is almost certainly due to the continued support of Deng, who may elevate him to the politburo standing committee at the upcoming 14th Party Congress. Tian has no significant ties to the military, however, and few strong personal ties with current members of the central party leadership. Any influence he exerts within a successor regime will likely occur as a supporter of more centrally placed, pro-reform leaders.

### **Li Tieying**

Li Tieying (b.1936) is a young, well-educated technocrat who was promoted rapidly to high state and party posts under the reforms. He received a degree in physics from a university in Czechoslovakia in 1961. After serving in the seventies as a leading engineer within the Fourth Ministry of Machine Building Industry, Li held a series of positions in the northeast, as a leading science and technology administrator and municipal party leader. His career took off in the mid-eighties, however, when he became secretary of the Liaoning Provincial Party Committee in 1983-84 and minister of electronics industry and alternate member of the party central committee in 1985. These promotions were followed by his election to the politburo in 1987, and his selection as state councillor and minister of State Education Commission in 1988. Li's career suggests that he is closely allied with the reformist camp, and to Deng Xiaoping. He is the son of Li Weihai and Deng Xiaoping's ex-wife Jin Weiying. Although he enjoys no apparent career links to the PLA, Li may enjoy the support of those younger officers most closely associated with military reform and defense science and technology, as a result of his service in the Fourth Ministry of Machine Building Industry and the Ministry of Electronics Industry. However, Li's political base and party experience appear extremely narrow, suggesting that, as with Tian Jiyun, his political survival in a post-Deng succession struggle will likely depend upon his establishment of alliances with other more powerful reformist figures.

### **Ye Xuanping**

Ye Xuanping (b.1924) is closely associated with economic reform and has a reputation as a competent administrator and regional leader. After early service in the industrial bureau of the CMC, Ye served for many years, from 1949 to 1960, as a deputy director of a machine tool plant in Shenyang, and then as a deputy chief engineer of the machinery bureau of the Shenyang Municipal Government. Unfortunately, little is known about Ye's activities during much of the sixties and seventies. At the beginning of the reform period (from 1978 to 1980),

he served as a bureau director within the State Science and Technology Commission, prior to beginning a long career as a leader in his native Guangdong. He was named a vice governor of Guangdong in 1980, and became mayor of Guangzhou and a deputy secretary of the Guangzhou party committee in 1983, one year after his election as a full member of the 12th Central Committee. Two years later, he was promoted to the governorship of the province, a position he held until early 1991. He was also reelected to the CCP CC in 1987. As governor of Guangdong, Ye was reportedly at the forefront of provincial resistance to attempts by Beijing conservatives to reassert central control over key economic levers. After Tiananmen, pressures grew to remove him from his provincial power base and involve him more closely in politics at the center (and thereby presumably defuse his influence) by offering him a senior government post. Ye was able to successfully resist such enticements until May 1991, when he finally resigned as governor and took up a largely ceremonial post as vice chairman of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPP CC).

Ye almost certainly lost some power as a result of his transfer to Beijing. Yet it is difficult to believe that he does not retain some significant influence over policies and politics in Guangdong. Both his successor as governor and the current secretary of the provincial party committee are reformists. Perhaps even more important as an indicator of his power within the regime, Ye reportedly continues to enjoy close relations with many military leaders as a result of his status as the son of the late Marshal Ye Jianying. Moreover, by virtue of his parentage, Ye Xuanping also remains linked to Zou Jiahua. Finally, unlike the current members of the PBSC, Ye is completely untainted by Tiananmen and its aftermath and maintains very good ties with Chinese businessmen and intellectuals. These factors, plus his military connection and regional power base, could provide Ye with distinct advantages in a post-Deng setting.

### He Pengfei

He Pengfei is currently not as important a political figure as Ye Xuanping. He is not even a member of the party central committee. Nevertheless, He is included in our discussion of the successor leadership largely because he is a leading member of the Princelings Party and also enjoys the strongest military credentials of that privileged elite. Little is known about He's early career, which was presumably spent in the PLA. He is currently a major general, head of the Armament Department of the GSD, and (perhaps most significant) the son of the late PLA Marshal He Long. As a result of his GSD post, he oversees the operations of "Polytechnologies," an arms trading enterprise of the GSD run by He Ping, a son-in-law of Deng Xiaoping (and concurrently deputy director of the Armament Department), and Yang Li, a daughter of Yang Shangkun, both also members of the Princelings Party.

He Pengfei is reportedly very close to Yang Shangkun (Yang reportedly praised He at some length during an enlarged CMC meeting in late 1991), and may even be related to both Yang and retired general Xiao Ke by marriage.<sup>21</sup> Despite such a link, many knowledgeable observers believe that He is not closely tied to any single leadership faction, preferring instead

<sup>21</sup>Yang Shangkun is a brother-in-law of Liao Hansheng (former deputy Defense Minister, political commissar of the Beijing, Nanjing, and Shenyang MRs and now a vice chairman of the NPC), who is He Pengfei's cousin and He Long's nephew. Xiao Ke is married to He Pengfei's mother's younger sister. The author is indebted to Phil Yang for this information. For further information on He Pengfei, see *Wide Angle*, Hong Kong, May 16, 1992.

to maintain some independence by interacting with several groups. As a result of his informal and formal ties, however, He is viewed as a major figure in the arms sales sector and an individual with significant status within the PLA. He therefore may be elevated to the party central committee at the upcoming 14th Party Congress. This will no doubt significantly improve his position within the regime. Yet his relative inexperience as a top leader suggests that He Pengfei's influence within the mainstream PLA and the party leadership may remain highly limited, unless he allies with more powerful figures such as the Yangs.

The activities of the Princelings Party and its connection to the arms sales network in China raise the important question of the military's general involvement in economic activities and its effect on power relationships among the elite. In addition to He Pengfei, He Ping, and Yang Li, a few other members of the Princelings Party also have ties to the PLA. The most notable include Yang Shaojing, a deputy director of a COSTIND research institute and son of Yang Shangkun; Ye Chumei, a deputy director of the Science and Technology Commission of COSTIND and daughter of Ye Jianyin; and Ye Xuanning, general manager of an arms sale company and son of Ye Jianying. Other lesser figures include a son of Li Peng who may be an officer in the PAP and a son of Qin Jiwei, who is a division-level cadre of a PLA unit. However, these individuals almost certainly do not exert an influence over the PLA's role in elite politics. Moreover, in general, most members of the Princelings Party have few direct links to the PLA. Instead, they hold positions largely within the state bureaucracy (often through trading corporations), and as "private" business persons, preferring to make money and live in relative luxury in China's major cities, rather than serve in military units or organizations in the hinterland.

Among higher ranking members of the military elite, however, control over various sectors of the huge defense industry complex and access to the foreign exchange generated by military equipment and arms sales no doubt serve to bolster the position of individual factional leaders, providing them with political advantages over their opponents. For example, it is likely that factional supporters of Zhang Aiping and Liu Huaqing are among such individuals, by virtue of both leaders' strong links to the defense industry and the military modernization effort. Whether the advantages resulting from such links are sufficient to decisively influence political interactions among factional players in a succession struggle is unclear. To even approach a resolution of such a question requires a detailed examination of the entire military-industrial complex in China; this Report makes no such attempt.

## **CENTRAL MILITARY LEADERS**

As with the elders and the civilian party leadership, only a relatively small number of central military leaders out of a much larger potential pool of candidates can be considered key factional players. According to discussions with knowledgeable Chinese, and on the basis of assessments of leadership posts, backgrounds, and other data, China's foremost central military officers can be divided into two informal tiers of importance. At the top are six PLA leaders occupying high party and military posts in Beijing, with impressive backgrounds in one or more of the "core" areas of the PLA central to future military involvement in politics: the offices of the CMC, the three central departments in Beijing (the GSD, the GPD, and the GLD), and combat infantry units within the regional military. This group includes Yang



Baibing, Chi Haotian, Zhao Nanqi, Zhou Keyu, Xu Xin, and Li Jijun. All except Xu Xin are central committee members.<sup>22</sup> Moreover, Yang, Chi, and Zhao are full PLA generals.

A second category of central military leaders consists of several high-ranking central officers whose careers and contacts are largely in “noncore” areas considered to be less central to future widespread military involvement in elite politics: the PLA Navy, the PLA Air Force, the Second Artillery, and the military science and technology sector. This group includes Wang Hai, Yang Yongbin, Zhu Guang, Zhang Lianzhong, Wei Jinshan, Li Xuge, Liu Anyuan, Ding Henggao, Yu Yongbo, and Wang Ruilin.<sup>23</sup>

Most of these central military leaders can be organized into three major factions and two minor groupings, largely on the basis of their common historical links to specific FA systems and other military organizations, and their personal relationships with key elders. Each major faction is led by the head of a central department and each is associated with a specific major elder or group of elders. The first, and most important, is the Yang Baibing/GPD Faction, associated with Yang Shangkun, but also with important independent sources of influence within the PLA, especially in Beijing. The second is the Chi Haotian/GSD Faction, with clear ties to the Zhang Aiping/Third FA elders. The third is the Zhao Nanqi/GLD Faction, with close ties to Hong Xuezhi and the Second FA elders, but with relatively little support among younger PLA leaders in both Beijing and the military regions. The two remaining, minor groupings are primarily associated with specific “noncore” service arms of the PLA, but exhibit secondary ties to one or more of the major factions, largely through common links with the elders. The first is the “Navy Faction” under Zhang Lianzhong, associated with both the Zhang Aiping/Third FA and the Second FA elders. The second is the “Air Force Faction” under Wang Hai, also associated with the Third FA elders. Both are less important players in leadership politics, but could exert considerable influence in a future leadership crisis by supporting the major factions. Only two central PLA officers cannot be identified with the above central leadership factions: Li Xuge and Xu Xin. Both figures may be supporters of the Yang Dezhi/Fifth FA Faction, although they also may enjoy links to other factions.

### **The Yang Baibing/GPD Faction**

The most powerful individual among the central PLA elite is Yang Baibing (b.1920), director of the GPD, secretary-general of the CMC, member of the party central committee secretariat, and younger half-brother to elder Yang Shangkun. Yang is a veteran political officer of the Second FA system with extensive service in China’s military regions. Although he probably owes his rise to power largely to Deng Xiaoping, he is undoubtedly very close to his elder half-brother Yang Shangkun. However, Yang’s relations with other PLA elders of the Second FA system are problematic, and remain a very important, unresolved issue that will likely have major implications for the pattern of possible PLA involvement in a future succession struggle.

Yang Baibing participated in the most famous Civil War campaigns of the Second FA, but did not serve as a commissar within combat units in the field. Instead, virtually all his formative

<sup>22</sup>Xu was an alternate member until 1987; more on his background below.

<sup>23</sup>See Appendix B for the current titles and party posts of these central PLA leaders.

years prior to the communist victory were spent within various organization departments of the Second FA, including the famous 129th Division of the Eighth Route Army under Deng Xiaoping. He continued to hold similar posts for many years after 1949, in the Second FA bastion of the southwest. He did not participate in the Korean War. Yang served for over ten years (from 1955 to 1966) in the headquarters of the Chengdu MR as organization department director and deputy head of the political department. He was reportedly either detained in custody or imprisoned during the GPCR, and did not reappear until 1979, when he was transferred to the Beijing MR. He rose rapidly through the regional headquarters to become MR political commissar in 1985. Two years later, he was named director of the GPD and elected to the party central committee. By 1988, he was a member of the CMC.<sup>24</sup>

Some analysts minimize Yang Baibing's position by stressing his apparent reliance upon the power and influence of both Deng and his elder half-brother. However, a growing body of evidence suggests that he has in recent years become a powerful figure in his own right, despite the fact that he does not yet hold a seat on the party politburo. Four major factors account for Yang's growing influence at the center. First, he succeeded his elder half-brother as CMC secretary-general after Tiananmen (the latter became first vice chairman of the CMC). This position, combined with his relationship with Yang Shangkun, give him access to China's military command and control apparatus.<sup>25</sup> Equally important, service as secretary-general of the CMC, along with his GPD post (see below), give Yang crucial influence over personnel appointments in the PLA. He is now largely responsible for drafting lists of proposed promotions, retirements, and transfers of military leaders for the CMC and the elder leadership, including dossier summaries of individual candidates for top central and regional posts. Obviously, such authority provides Yang with considerable influence over the selection of leading PLA personnel. Indeed, the two half-brothers may have used the personnel reshuffles of spring-summer 1990 and the restructuring of the PAP to strengthen their positions throughout parts of the military, installing officers loyal to them in vital command slots, especially in the Beijing area.<sup>26</sup>

Second, Yang Baibing's position as head of the GPD gives him very significant avenues of power and influence within the PLA in a variety of areas. The GPD's main function as "guardian of the faith" within the PLA provides Yang Baibing with enormous influence over officers and rank-and-file soldiers, through both the propaganda apparatus and the activities of unit political commissars. Specifically, until at least 1991, Yang sought to use the leadership's post-Tiananmen reemphasis on ideology and party control over the PLA to raise the importance of the GPD's political commissar system within the military, while using the military media to attack those "secular" aspects of military reform which downplay politics and ideology. The military newspaper *Jiefangjun Bao* (under GPD control) was the major source of the most strident rhetoric emerging after Tiananmen concerning the dangers to the military posed by the forces of "bourgeois liberalization" and "peaceful evolution."

By late 1991, however, Yang Baibing apparently began to move away from this hardline emphasis on political criteria in the PLA, using his control of the GPD to express support for

<sup>24</sup>The information on Yang's situation during the GPCR derives from Shambaugh, 1991, p. 543.

<sup>25</sup>Unless he were specifically excluded from that apparatus by Deng Xiaoping, which is unlikely. See Chapter 6.

<sup>26</sup>The role of the Yongs in the PLA leadership reshuffles of 1990 and their relationship to leaders of the PAP and certain armed units in the Beijing area will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 5.

continued economic reform. At the March 1992 session of the NPC, Yang publicly endorsed the slogan that the PLA must "Serve As A Protector and Escort" for the reforms (*Baojia Huhang*).<sup>27</sup> An enlarged meeting of the CMC held in Beijing the following month (and attended by regional military leaders) invoked the same slogan, thereby explicitly linking the PLA as a whole with support for further reform, while also suggesting Yang's growing influence within the military.<sup>28</sup> Yang's shift toward a more moderate line had followed calls by Deng Xiaoping for the PLA to respond more positively to the reform and open door policy, part of an overall effort to oppose "leftism" within the leadership which the elder patriarch had initiated in 1991.<sup>29</sup>

Informed analysts differ over whether Yang's apparent shift in line reflects genuine conviction of the need for continued reform in the PLA, but few disagree that he is attempting to strengthen further his overall political position by publicly moving closer to Deng and the reformist camp. Yang's goal is presumably to ensure that he is promoted to the party politburo and picked to succeed Yang Shangkun as first vice chairman of the CMC and director of the PLA's daily affairs at the upcoming 14th Party Congress. Such promotions would almost certainly establish him as the dominant new elder leader influencing policy toward the military, and thus perhaps the primary kingmaker during the post-Deng, post-Yang succession period.<sup>30</sup>

Yang Baibing's influence as GPD head may also have increased as a result of post-Tiananmen organizational changes in the system of discipline inspection within the military. Beginning in mid-1990, a newly formed Discipline Inspection Department (DID) within the GPD took over responsibility for most of the daily work previously performed by the DIC of the CMC. Essentially eclipsing the latter body in importance, such a move places formal control over the supervision and inspection of the loyalty and political "purity" of PLA party committee members in the hands of Yang Baibing.<sup>31</sup> Although the overall authority of DID operatives within military units may actually be quite limited (see Chapter 6), the discipline inspection system at the very least provides Yang with greater access to personal information on leading officers (e.g., regarding sexual indiscretions or involvement in corruption) that can be used to undermine or promote their careers.

<sup>27</sup>For information on the "*Baojia Huhang*" slogan, see Tai Ming Cheung, "Following Orders," *FEER*, May 28, 1992, p. 24.

<sup>28</sup>Also see the front page article on the "*Baojia Huhang*" slogan appearing in the *Jiefangjun Bao* of April 4, 1992, which stressed the need for all PLA personnel to support Deng's economic reform efforts.

<sup>29</sup>The impact of Deng's pro-reform initiative upon the PLA was first evident at an All-Army Political Work Forum held in Guangzhou in September 1991, almost certainly orchestrated by Yang Baibing. Commissars attending that conference were given special trips to the nearby SEZs, so they could "more deeply appreciate" Deng's economic policies. These trips preceded Deng's own highly publicized January 1992 inspection visit to the SEZs, and have been followed by further excursions to Guangdong and the SEZs by many high-ranking PLA commanders and commissars, which took place throughout much of 1992. See *SCMP*, September 6, 1991, p. 12, in *FBIS-CHI*, September 6, 1991, pp. 42-43.

<sup>30</sup>Moreover, this CMC promotion would also minimize, if not eliminate altogether, the negative consequences for Yang's position that would result from his removal as GPD head at the 14th Congress. This possibility has been raised by many Chinese and foreign observers.

<sup>31</sup>We should note that one informant with considerable past experience in the PLA insists that the PLA discipline inspection apparatus has always been controlled by the GPD. This individual asserts that the formal announcement of a "new" DID was merely intended for popular consumption, to indicate to the public that the PLA was unified and that the leadership was placing greater emphasis on the role of the GPD. This has not been confirmed by the author.

As GPD head, Yang Baibing is also in command of the PLA's internal secret police, directed by the GPD Security Department (*baowei bu*). This organization extends throughout the military, and is responsible for conducting counterintelligence and maintaining internal security. It thus greatly augments the functions of the discipline inspection system by investigating "anti-party activities" in the PLA and routinely keeping track of all leading officers. When combined with his general authority as CMC secretary general, Yang's influence over this apparatus, as well as the discipline inspection system, give him unequaled power over personnel placement and removal among the higher levels of the PLA elite.<sup>32</sup>

A third key element of Yang Baibing's power and influence derives from his extensive service in China's military regions, especially the Beijing MR. There is little evidence to indicate that Yang established important relationships with surviving party and military leaders during his pre-Cultural Revolution service in the southwest.<sup>33</sup> However, eight years as a top-level political officer in the Beijing MR during the eighties apparently provided him with the opportunity to develop a significant power base in that region, as suggested by its current leadership structure. Other, much weaker links to Yang may exist within the Nanjing MR and the Guangzhou MR (through Yang Shangkun).<sup>34</sup>

Finally, Yang Baibing's influence may also derive from his personal ties with elders other than his half-brother. He is the oldest of the leading figures within the PLA elite at the center, and thus is the most likely individual to enjoy close links with the remaining members of the gerontocracy, especially those linked to the Second FA system. Few observers doubt that he is supported by Deng Xiaoping, the patron of that system. Indeed, even with Yang Shangkun's presence within the upper elite, it is difficult to believe that Yang Baibing could have risen so rapidly to high and powerful posts in both the CMC and GPD without Deng's assent.

However, Yang's possible ties to other PLA elders from the Second FA system are a subject of considerable controversy. Some observers believe that Liu Huaqing and Qin Jiwei are among those senior military leaders most uncomfortable with Tiananmen and opposed to the Yangs and their policies. According to some reports, Qin supported leaders within the Beijing MR in resisting the crackdown, and may also have opposed the Yangs over personnel shifts within the CMC after the events of June 1989. Liu Huaqing's association with military modernization suggests that he may be highly unsympathetic to Yang Baibing's post-Tiananmen repoliticization efforts. Various public remarks both he and Qin Jiwei have made since then contrast with the polemical tone of speeches given by the Yangs, stressing instead the need for regular military training while downplaying the GPD's emphasis on political education. Moreover, some informed analysts believe that Liu Huaqing is Yang's only real

<sup>32</sup>See Chapter 6 for further details on the political commissar system, the discipline inspection system, and the internal security system under the GPD.

<sup>33</sup>Yang may still maintain ties with current middle-ranking (i.e., division- and regiment-level) leaders in the Chengdu MR, given the fact that he was in charge of the region's organization work for many years and thus had influence over the promotion of such officers from the lowest ranks of the regional command. However, we have no solid evidence of such links.

<sup>34</sup>See Chapter 5 for analysis of these regional links.

challenger for control over the daily affairs of the PLA.<sup>35</sup> On a more general level, Yang Baibing is reportedly disliked by many professional combat officers as a political work cadre "... ignorant of military building" and lacking combat experience, and as a mere opportunist raised to high office by the elder Yang after a relatively undistinguished career in the PLA political apparatus. Such views are allegedly shared by many PLA elders as well.<sup>36</sup>

In contrast, some well-informed observers of the PLA vehemently reject the notion that senior elder leaders are opposed to Yang Baibing. They interpret the above-mentioned differences in the public statements of Yang and Liu Huaqing as merely a reflection of their differing responsibilities: Yang as chief political officer within the PLA charged by Deng and the CMC to strengthen party control over the military after Tiananmen, and Liu as a leading CMC member charged with responsibility for military modernization and training. Moreover, at least one former PLA officer posted in the Beijing area for many years insists that Yang's relations with Liu Huaqing are in fact very cordial. This is also suggested by the backgrounds of the two men. Of the remaining most influential PLA elders from the Second FA system under Deng, Liu Huaqing is the only individual associated with the politics, propaganda, and organization sectors, where Yang spent his military career. In fact, the two may have interacted closely in the late thirties. Liu was head of the propaganda and education section of the 129th Division when Yang was serving in a lesser post in the offices of the Political Department of that unit. The two subsequently served in similar areas of the Second FA system during the Civil War and participated in several major campaigns from that period. Yang's relations with Qin Jiwei may also not be as strained as some analysts suggest. The two officers served together in the southwest during the early fifties, and briefly as leaders of the Beijing MR during the eighties.<sup>37</sup>

Another, older PLA leader of the Second FA system who may be tied to Yang Baibing is Guo Linxiang. Guo was deputy political commissar of the Public Security Force of the Southwest Military Area in the early fifties and a deputy political commissar of the Chengdu MR when Yang served in these areas. He also was a deputy director of the GPD in the late eighties when Yang Baibing was director, as well as secretary of the CMC DIC. However, these latter postings could have served to create friction between the two military leaders, since Guo served in a subordinate position to a younger and more junior leader.

In addition to the above sources of power and influence, Yang Baibing also benefits from the apparent support he receives from other members of the central PLA elite. Three in particular are viewed to varying degrees as his allies: Zhou Keyu, Yu Yongbo, and Liu Anyuan.

<sup>35</sup>See *SCMP*, July 15, 1992, p. 10, in *FBIS-CHI*, July 15, 1992, pp. 16-17, for a report on Deng's possible selection of Liu Huaqing to replace Yang Shangkun after the 14th Party Congress. The article states that unnamed Western defense analysts believe Deng actually desires both Yang and Liu to run the PLA, with the former concentrating on ideological concerns and the latter on technical and professional matters.

<sup>36</sup>See *Jiefangjun Bao*, December 30, 1990, in *FBIS-CHI*, February 6, 1990, p. 10; *LAD*, January 9, 1990, in *FBIS-CHI*, January 30, 1990, p. 18; and *Jiefangjun Bao*, February 8, 1990, in *FBIS-CHI*, March 2, 1990, pp. 23-24 for examples of remarks by Qin Jiwei and similar articles that downplayed political work. See *Cheng Ming*, No. 155, September 1, 1990, in *FBIS-CHI*, September 6, 1990, pp. 39-40; and *Kaifang*, No. 44, August 15, 1990, in *FBIS-CHI*, August 23, 1990, pp. 35-37 for stories alleging that several PLA elders (including those who signed the famous May 17, 1989, letter cautioning against the use of the PLA against the Tiananmen demonstrators) complained to Jiang Zemin in mid-1990 about the overconcentration of military power in the hands of the Yangs.

<sup>37</sup>The nature of the relationship between Qin and Yang is obviously of very great importance to any assessment of the possible role Beijing forces might play in a future succession struggle. For further details on this issue, see Chapters 5 and 8.

All are veteran political officers who served for most of their early and mid-careers as commissars in combat units, and all rose to relatively high posts in the regional military apparatus. Their possible links to Yang are not based on field army ties, however, thus showing the limits of that approach in determining factional alliances.

Zhou Keyu (b.1929) is seen by some analysts as a major figure in the PLA hierarchy likely to play a key role for many years in the future.<sup>38</sup> A native of Jiangsu, Zhou is a veteran cadre of the Third FA system, and probably spent most of his military career in East China, within the Jinan MR, prior to entering the central elite. He was a company political instructor in northern Jiangsu in 1947–48. After participating in the major Civil War campaigns of the Third FA, he held a series of political posts in field units at the regimental and divisional levels, becoming a division deputy political commissar in 1976. These posts were probably in either the 20th or 26th Corps, both based in East China after the Korean War. Zhou then entered the Jinan MR command, first as a deputy propaganda department director, and then as organization department director. After a short stint at the corps level as a political commissar in 1983–84 (where he had not served previously), Zhou entered the GPD as assistant to the director, and became executive deputy director in 1985. It was during this period that he reportedly developed a close relationship with Yang Baibing, who was still serving in the Beijing MR. Apparently because of Yang's support, Zhou was promoted in 1990 to become political commissar of the GLD, replacing Liu Anyuan and serving alongside Zhao Nanqi. He has been a member of the party central committee since 1982.

Yu Yongbo (b.1931) stands somewhat lower in the PLA power hierarchy, although he is also a member of the party central committee (since 1987). Currently a deputy director of the GPD, Yu is a Fourth FA veteran, a native of Liaoning, and almost certainly a veteran cadre of the "southern" Fourth FA contingent.<sup>39</sup> He fought in most of the major Fourth FA campaigns of the Civil War, including the conquest of South China. After service in the Korean War, he held a variety of political posts at the regimental and divisional levels, eventually becoming political commissar of the 42nd Corps of the Guangzhou MR in 1983. Gu Hui was MR commander at that time.<sup>40</sup> Yu also reportedly served together with Yang Shangkun in the Guangzhou MR in the late seventies.<sup>41</sup> He was transferred to serve as political department director of the Nanjing MR in 1985, however, and was named a member of the party central committee two years later, at the 13th Party Congress. Yu played a notable role in the Tiananmen crisis as a leading Nanjing MR official, and has been a major supporter of Yang Baibing's repoliticization effort since that time, publicly identified with the revived "Learn from Lei Feng" campaign of 1990–1991. He was promoted to his current post in December 1989. Although a likely supporter of Yang Baibing (perhaps originally through Yang Shangkun), Yu's career strongly suggests that he came up through the ranks of the 42nd

<sup>38</sup>See, for example, Chin-ming Ho, "China: The 31 Military Power Holders," *Jane's Intelligence Review*, Vol. 3, No. 9, September 1991, pp. 424–427. Ho places Zhou, by virtue of his current position, age, region of birth, military rank, military faction (he is associated with the Third FA system), position within the party, and overall military experience, as among the uppermost PLA leaders of the future, along with Yang Baibing, Chi Haotian, and Zhao Nanqi.

<sup>39</sup>The role of various "northern" and "southern" Fourth Field Army cadres in the regional military is discussed in detail in Chapter 5.

<sup>40</sup>See Chapter 5 for a discussion of Gu Hui's background and possible personal affiliations. He is currently commander of the Nanjing MR.

<sup>41</sup>Willy Wo-lap Lam, "Yang Shangkun Ally Receives Political Post," *Hong Kong Standard*, January 4, 1990, pp. 1–2.

Corps, which fought in the south and in Korea. This background probably provides him with strong ties to leading regional figures such as Gu Hui.

Liu Anyuan (b.1927) is also a former member of the Fourth FA system, a professional field unit political officer, and a central committee member. He was also among the large number of Fourth FA cadres who fought in major campaigns in South China during the Civil War, and probably became a member of the "southern" Fourth FA contingent, along with Yu Yongbo. After participating in the occupation of Hainan Island, Liu held a series of political posts at the regimental, divisional, and corps level, becoming a deputy corps political commissar in 1972. He apparently did not serve in Korea. From 1973 to 1985, Liu served as a deputy director of the GPD organization and cadre departments, before moving up to become deputy political commissar of the Guangzhou MR from 1985 to 1987 and then GLD political commissar until 1990. He transferred to serve as political commissar of the Second Artillery in 1990, reportedly in part because of support from Yang Baibing. Liu's background suggests that he served with units of the former 43rd Corps of the 15th Army, based in the former Wuhan MR. The 43rd was the only "southern" Fourth FA unit that participated in the Hainan campaign but did not deploy to Korea. Its disbandment in 1985 most likely weakened Liu's factional base. This lack of an independent political foundation could explain, at least in part, why he may have attached himself to Yang Baibing.<sup>42</sup>

Some well-informed analysts of the PLA regard the transfers of Zhou Keyu to the GLD and Liu Anyuan to the Second Artillery as indications of Yang Baibing's efforts since Tiananmen to expand his factional support network beyond the GPD.<sup>43</sup> Moreover, Zhou, Liu, and Yu Yongbo may provide (or strengthen) links between the Yang Faction and the Jinan and Guangzhou MRs, and with senior regional leaders of the former "southern" Fourth FA Faction, especially Zhang Wannian and Gu Shanqing.

One member of the central PLA elite who is not usually identified as a possible associate of Yang, but whose career suggests otherwise, is Wang Ruilin (b.1929), currently deputy director of the CCP CC General Office, secretary of the DIC of the CMC and most important, personal secretary to Deng Xiaoping. Wang's background is relatively unique among high-level PLA leaders. An early career in the Confidential Section of the Northeast Military Command and the subsequent Government Administrative Council in the late forties and early fifties was followed by service in the Office of the State Council Vice Premier from 1973 to 1976 and the CMC Chairman's Office after 1977. He became deputy director of the CC General Office, and probably also Deng's personal secretary, in 1983. It is highly unlikely that Wang would be promoted to such sensitive positions unless he had the absolute confidence and support of both Deng and Yang Shangkun. Indeed, at least one very knowledgeable former PLA officer in Beijing told the author that Wang routinely represents Deng at CMC and other high-level meetings. Since some observers thus view Wang as a protégé of Deng, it is very possible that he is also very close to Yang Shangkun and through him, to Yang Baibing.

Finally, many Hong Kong observers believe an irreconcilable conflict exists between Yang Baibing and Yang Shangkun and Party General Secretary and CMC Chairman Jiang Zemin.

<sup>42</sup>Other former cadres of the 43rd Corps will be discussed in the following chapter.

<sup>43</sup>Another indication of Yang's efforts in this regard might include the appointment of GPD Propaganda Department Director Shao Huaze to be editor-in-chief of *Renmin Ribao* (the leading party newspaper) in June 1989.

This conflict allegedly stems from the basic contradiction between Jiang's formal position as head of the military (and Deng's anointed successor) and the position of the Yang brothers as the genuine powerholders within the CMC. Reports suggest that as Jiang has gained greater confidence in speaking out on military matters in his capacity as CMC chairman, he has shown increasing signs of challenging the political line taken by Yang Baibing, through remarks in support of "secular" professional PLA concerns. His above-mentioned attempts to improve his relationship with PLA elders and "moderate" commanders are also seen as being linked to this struggle. Some analysts suggest that an attempt by Yang Baibing to remove Chi Haotian as head of the GSD was frustrated by Jiang Zemin (see below), which indicates that Jiang and Yang Baibing are strongly opposed to one another. In addition, some Chinese insiders stress the above advantages that Yang Baibing enjoys over Jiang in the power game. They thus believe that Jiang could easily fall under the control of the Yangs and be used or discarded by them after Deng's death, unless he manages to obtain clear support from major elder leaders (and their younger associates) outside the Yang Faction.

In contrast to these views, however, other well-informed observers believe that Yang Baibing and Jiang Zemin may actually be cooperating to ensure regime stability after the deaths of Deng and Yang Shangkun. They accept the argument that Yang is not a committed ideologue, but rather a relative moderate doing what is expected of him by the elders, and that he and Jiang have a mutual incentive to ally together against the more rigid conservatives under Chen Yun and Li Peng. If true, such a relationship could provide the basis for relative stability in the immediate post-Deng period, although it still leaves open the question of Yang's relationship to Liu Huaqing and Qin Jiwei.

In sum, Yang Baibing possesses independent bases of power through the CMC Secretariat, the GPD, the PLA discipline inspection apparatus, and the Beijing Military Region. Equally important, he may also have a significant number of likely supporters within the central PLA elite. Through such individuals, along with his general influence over personnel selection and the political control apparatus, Yang may have managed to expand his factional network to several central and regional organs of the PLA. His overall military support network probably still remains narrow compared to that of other PLA leaders, however, and may be strongly opposed by several other PLA groupings, as we shall see below.

### **The Chi Haotian/GSD Faction**

Chi Haotian (b.1929), chief of the GSD since 1987, is by many accounts the most influential central military leader next to Yang Baibing. He is a highly decorated political officer and long-term veteran of the 27th Corps of the Third FA system, with extensive combat experience. Chi served as a company political officer within the 27th Corps during the Civil War, and as a battalion political instructor with the same unit during the Korean War. He continued to serve with the 27th Corps for many years afterward, first in East China, and then in the Beijing MR, where it was transferred during the Cultural Revolution.<sup>44</sup> While in the Nanjing and Beijing MRs, Chi was promoted from division political department head to division deputy political commissar to corps political department deputy director to division political commissar. During his rise to the higher ranks of the political commissar structure

<sup>44</sup>The 27th Corps eventually formed the core of today's 27th Group Army, based in Hebei.



of the 27th Corps, Chi first established ties with You Taizhong and thus perhaps with Deng Xiaoping and the former Second FA leadership. You was commander of the 27th Corps in the late sixties when Chi was a corps division political commissar. The two men apparently moved together to Beijing with the 27th Corps in late 1970, to replace the 38th Corps as the garrison unit of the capital.<sup>45</sup>

Chi became deputy Beijing MR political commissar in 1974, after serving briefly as a member of a core leading group at *Jiefangjun Bao*. In late 1976, he reportedly served with Qin Jiwei on a task force charged with the handling of the Gang of Four. For about one year after the smashing of the Gang, Chi then held a post as first deputy chief editor of *Renmin Ribao*. During this period, the paper reportedly received strong backing from Deng Xiaoping, Ye Jianying, and Hu Yaobang.<sup>46</sup> In October 1977, Chi entered the GSD as a deputy chief and concurrent political department director, serving directly under first Deng Xiaoping and then Yang Dezhi. Before becoming chief of the GSD in 1987, Chi served as political commissar of the Jinan MR from 1985 to 1987, alongside commander Li Jiulong.<sup>47</sup> He was on the Yunnan front in early 1985, as either deputy chief of the GSD or Jinan MR political commissar.

Given his long, continuous link to the Third FA system in the forties, fifties, and sixties, there is little doubt that Chi Haotian is closely associated with Zhang Aiping and the Third FA system. In addition, he apparently served with Zhang as GSD deputy director in the eighties. However, Chi's career also clearly suggests significant secondary ties with non-Third FA leaders such as Qin Jiwei, Deng Xiaoping, You Taizhong, and Yang Dezhi. His links with Second FA elders Deng and You are particularly significant.

Five other members of the top PLA elite at the center came out of the Third FA system: Zhou Keyu, Wang Hai, Wei Jinshan, Yang Yongbin, and Zhang Lianzhong. However, analysis of most of their careers again suggests the limits of using field army system affiliations to determine likely factional associations. Few can be identified as primary supporters of Zhang Aiping and Chi Haotian. The most important of these individuals, Zhou Keyu, is probably associated with Yang Baibing, as discussed above. The second most significant figure, the commander of the PLA Air Force, Wang Hai, is most likely the leader of his own service-based faction, as is former Third FA veteran Zhang Lianzhong, head of the PLA Navy, although both factions have policy-based interests that could ultimately reinforce their FA-based ties with Zhang Aiping and Chi Haotian. Yang Yongbin, as a career commissar in the PLAAF, is also probably a primary supporter of the Wang Hai Faction.<sup>48</sup>

Wei Jinshan (b.1927) is thus the only former Third FA cadre at the center who is probably primarily linked with Chi Haotian and the Zhang Aiping/Third FA Faction. Even here, however, such ties are combined with likely connections to the Second FA system and Deng Xiaoping. Both Wei and Chi are natives of Shandong. More important, both were company political instructors in the Third FA immediately after the end of World War II. Wei became a political officer and division operations staff officer and chief of staff in the late forties. He then continued in the Third FA system for several years after 1949, including service during

<sup>45</sup>According to one very knowledgeable PLA analyst in Hong Kong, this unit shift was probably a strategic move taken by Mao and Zhou Enlai, in preparation for a showdown with Lin Biao and his supporters.

<sup>46</sup>This statement is based on information given to the author by PLA analysts in Hong Kong.

<sup>47</sup>Liu was named commander of the Chengdu MR in mid-1992, replacing Zhang Taiheng. See Chapter 5.

<sup>48</sup>See the discussions below of the Air Force and Navy factions for more on Wang, Yang, and Zhang.

the Korean War as deputy operations and training chief at the division level. During the mid- to late fifties and early sixties, Wei held various military training and political commissar posts in the Nanjing MR before becoming commander of a regiment, probably still in Nanjing. Much of Wei's early and middle career period thus provided opportunities for establishing strong links with Chi (and with former Third FA cadres still serving in East China). By the late sixties, however, Wei had shifted to units of the Second FA system although still in the Nanjing MR. He served for several years as political commissar of the famous "Linfen Brigade," a showcase unit attached to the 60th Corps of the former Second FA, based in Anhui. By 1978, Wei had advanced to the position of political commissar of Nanjing's 12th Corps, also formerly of the Second FA and led, in the early sixties, by You Taizhong. Moreover, during Wei's early period of service in the Nanjing MR (i.e., from the mid-fifties to the early seventies), the region was commanded by Xu Shiyong, another very powerful PLA commander of the Second FA system.

Wei's subsequent rapid career rise during the eighties tends to suggest that he may indeed enjoy strong support from both Zhang Aiping and Deng Xiaoping. He was named an alternate member of the 12th CCP CC in September 1982 (when Xiang Shouzhi took over command of the Nanjing MR), an extraordinary honor for a corps-level officer. In December he became director of the Nanjing MR Political Department, under Xiang Shouzhi and political commissar Guo Linxiang (also a veteran of the Second FA system). Wei then directly succeeded Chi Haotian as GSD Political Department director in late 1984, serving under Yang Dezhi. However, he was soon transferred to the Navy during the mid-1985 PLA reorganization, and became a deputy political commissar under then Navy commander Liu Huaqing and political commissar Li Yaowen. Wei also continued to move up the party ranks, becoming a full central committee member during the same year. He was reelected to the same party post at the 13th Party Congress in 1987. In 1988, he was awarded the rank of vice admiral, and then became Navy political commissar in the personnel reshuffles of 1990.

Ding Henggao (b.1931), although not of the Third FA system, is the final probable associate of Chi Haotian among the central PLA leadership. Currently Director of COSTIND, Ding is one of the youngest members of the central PLA leadership. He is an engineer by training whose career has been spent almost entirely in the defense industry sector, as a director of design institutes and research bureaus within the Ministry of Defense, Machine Building Ministries, and COSTIND. Despite his youth and narrowly focused career outside the mainstream of military unit command, Ding nonetheless became a central committee member at the relatively early age of 51, became head of COSTIND at 54, and was promoted to the rank of lieutenant general at 57. His successes have almost certainly been attained through close association with Nie Rongzhen (his father-in-law) and Zhang Aiping. Hence, he is undoubtedly closely linked with the Zhang Aiping Faction (as well as to Zou Jiahua) and probably through them with Chi Haotian. As with Wei Jinshan, however, Ding's ties to the defense industry sector also suggest an association with the Second FA elders, primarily through Liu Huaqing.

In sum, Chi Haotian leads the second strongest grouping within the central PLA elite, with clear ties to the Zhang Aiping Faction. Moreover, his position is undoubtedly bolstered greatly by the fact that he has clearly enjoyed the strong support of Deng Xiaoping for many years, and that both he and several of his associates at the center are probably linked to other Second FA elders as well, especially You Taizhong and Liu Huaqing. Overall, however,

Chi's relationships with members of the central PLA elite appear limited in number and concentrated in areas of the military less important to its role in elite struggle (e.g., the PLA Navy, Second Artillery, and COSTIND). His possible connections with the regional military apparatus outside the Beijing MR are discussed in the next chapter.

### **The Zhao Nanqi/GLD Faction**

GLD Director Zhao Nanqi (b.1926) is the third most important member of the PLA central elite. A native of Jilin and an ethnic Korean, Zhao emerged from the Fourth FA system in the northeast, and began to serve under Hong Xuezhi during the Korean War. In 1951, when Hong was given the task of setting up the logistics headquarters of the Chinese People's Volunteers (CPV), Zhao was one of two capable staff officers recommended to Hong to be his assistants. After his return from Korea, Zhao was enrolled at the PLA Logistics Academy from 1955 to 1957. From that time until 1985, all his known activities were in his native Jilin, where he held both party and military posts. Interestingly, as noted in Chapter 3, Hong Xuezhi was banished to Jilin to serve as a provincial industrial department head after he became implicated in the Peng Dehuai "anti-party clique." He remained there from 1960 to 1977. Unexplained gaps in Zhao Nanqi's career in 1965 and 1969-76 suggest he might have been implicated along with Hong. Moreover, like Hong Xuezhi, Zhao reappeared in 1977. He became a full member of the party central committee in 1982, while still in Jilin. By 1983, he had risen to become a provincial party secretary and concurrent political commissar of the Jilin MD. In 1985, Zhao was brought to Beijing to serve as a deputy director as well as deputy political commissar of the GLD. At that time, Hong Xuezhi held the concurrent posts of director and political commissar of the GLD.

There is little doubt that Zhao has enjoyed extremely close ties with Hong Xuezhi since at least the fifties, through whom he probably established links with Deng Xiaoping. Zhao rose very rapidly during the reform period as a result of such ties, and was personally chosen by Deng to succeed Hong as GLD director in 1987, in order to provide strong leadership continuity within the logistics sector. Zhao's likely ties to Jilin may serve to increase whatever support Hong might retain through his own early Fourth FA/Northeast China ties. Yet the GLD Director has few apparent personal associates among his colleagues within the upper ranks of the central PLA elite. Also, his relative youth makes it highly unlikely that he enjoys ties with older members of the Fourth FA system other than Hong. Moreover, we have no solid evidence that Zhao is associated with any of the current leaders of the Shenyang MR.<sup>49</sup>

One possible indirect Zhao Nanqi supporter within the central PLA elite is Li Jijun (b.1934), largely because of the latter's ties to certain Second FA elders. Li is currently director of the CMC General Office. Although not normally included among the highest strata of the PLA elite, he is placed in that category because several knowledgeable Chinese identified him to the author as a "rising star" within the military. Li's apparent influence is indicated by the fact that he became a CCP CC member at the age of 49, and was reelected to that body in 1987. He joined the PLA in 1950, at the age of 16, and served in the Korean War. Much of

<sup>49</sup>Much of the above information on Hong Xuezhi was provided by one particularly knowledgeable source in Hong Kong.

his early and middle military career was spent as a reconnaissance staff officer in a corps headquarters and then as a military researcher in the AMS. He may have remained with the AMS until as late as 1982. Li was then appointed commander of the Beijing MR's 38th Corps, probably in 1983 or 1984. This suggests that Li's earlier service as a staff officer may have also been with the 38th Corps, since it would be unusual to appoint an outside officer to such a post. Li's task as commander was reportedly to organize the unit as the PLA's first mechanized group army, a pilot scheme in which then CMC Executive Vice Chairman Yang Shangkun took a personal interest. Li reportedly developed close ties with Qin Jiwei during this time (Qin was commander of the Beijing MR throughout Li's service in the region). He was promoted to deputy director of the important CMC General Office in 1987, serving under Yang Shangkun, and became acting director in 1990 (after the retirement of Liu Kai), and then director in November 1991. His duties apparently included the development of strategy and operations proposals for the CMC membership.

One can readily see why some individuals in the PLA regard Li Jijun as a significant figure for the future, despite his lack of pre-1949 unit ties. He has strong credentials as both a former unit commander within China's most important military region and as a military strategist. His promotions within the Beijing MR almost certainly came through the support of Qin Jiwei and Yang Shangkun. In addition, his recent career in the CMC General Office suggests that he has the support of both Yang Shangkun and Deng Xiaoping. Li was also reportedly very close to Zhao Ziyang prior to Tiananmen. Although this latter factor could be regarded as a limitation within the current political environment in China, there is no evidence that Li has suffered because of it. He was promoted to acting director and then director of the CMC General Office after the Tiananmen crisis. Li Jijun could therefore serve as a younger supporter of Zhao Nanqi, Hong Xuezhi, and the Second FA elders, and perhaps as a bridge between them and the Yangs after the death of Deng.<sup>50</sup>

In sum, Zhao Nanqi leads a third major grouping among the central PLA leadership, with close ties to Hong Xuezhi and the Second FA elders. Although currently enjoying considerable influence by virtue of such associations, Zhao's position is severely limited, from a long-term perspective, because of his weak links to any possible former Fourth FA colleagues and few apparent associates within the central military leadership. His long-term prospects as a major participant in a post-Deng leadership struggle do not look very good, therefore, unless he manages to strengthen likely ties with Chi Haotian or Yang Baibing (through Yang Shangkun).

### **The Wang Hai/PLA Air Force Faction**

Wang Hai (b.1925) became associated with the PLAAF very early in his military career, serving with great distinction as a fighter pilot during the Korean War. Although sometimes mentioned by the Hong Kong press as a supporter of Yang Baibing, Wang is more likely a powerful figure in his own right and head of an "Air Force Faction" including, among other

<sup>50</sup>However, despite his apparently good relations with Yang Shangkun, Li Jijun apparently does not get along with Yang Baibing. According to Hong Kong sources, Yang tried to block Li's formal promotion to the top post in the General Office, forcing him to serve as acting director for over a year. If true, this factor could severely reduce Li's role as an intermediary between the Yangs and the Second FA elders. See *SCMP*, November 19, 1991, p. 12, in *FBIS-CHI*, November 22, 1991, pp. 29-30.

senior central PLA cadres, Zhu Guang (political commissar of the PLAAF) and perhaps Yang Yongbin (political commissar of the AMS).<sup>51</sup> Wang and Zhu cooperated very closely in the late eighties as commander and top political officer, respectively, of the PLAAF, furthering a process of regularization that began with Zhang Tingfa.<sup>52</sup> As a result of these efforts, the PLAAF has made more progress than other military services toward adopting a less politicized, professional military approach to development. This may have served as a basis for the establishment of policy-based ties with groups closely linked to the military modernization effort, such as Zhang Aiping and the Third FA Faction. Such ties may also be strengthened because of the early Third FA ties of Wang Hai and other leading PLAAF cadres.<sup>53</sup>

### The Zhang Lianzhong/PLA Navy Faction

Zhang Lianzhong (b. 1931), currently commander of the PLA Navy (PLAN), is also a veteran of the Third FA system. Unlike Wang Hai, however, Zhang served for many years as an infantry officer within that system after 1949. His career took a major turn in the sixties when he entered the PLA Naval Submarine Academy. He became a naval officer after graduating in 1965 and has remained in the PLA Navy ever since, serving in a variety of leadership posts before becoming commander in 1988.

Although also mentioned as a follower of Yang Baibing, it is more likely that Zhang leads a service-oriented group similar to Wang Hai's "Air Force Faction." Given Zhang's relatively low stature among central PLA leaders (he is only an alternate central committee member and a vice admiral while Wang is a full member and a full general), and the PLA Navy's overall peripheral position in the military power hierarchy, such a "Navy Faction" may have less influence in elite politics than the "Air Force Faction." Yet it probably has very close links with the Second FA Faction, given Liu Huaqing's important role in naval development. Moreover, as a major beneficiary of military modernization efforts under the reforms, the "Navy Faction," like the "Air Force Faction," is almost certainly supportive of the Zhang Aiping Faction. This becomes especially likely when we consider that many of the PLA units originally used to form the PLAN came from the Third FA, and that key Third FA cadres in addition to Zhang Lianzhong played a major role in the development of the PLAN. Ye Fei (former Navy commander and political commissar) is one such example. The current PLAN political commissar, Wei Jinshan, is also a former Third FA cadre (and a full member of the party central committee). Finally, the Navy Faction's likely support for Zhang Aiping is sug-

<sup>51</sup>Yang Yongbin is among the lowest ranking members of the central PLA elite. He is not a party central committee member. Yang was a relatively junior political officer in the Third FA before he became a career commissar in the PLA Air Force. He apparently served in several regional military units, including from 1983 to 1990 as political commissar of the Lanzhou MR Air Force, and then became political commissar and deputy dean of the AMS. Although it is difficult to establish his political ties with any degree of confidence, he is probably most closely linked to Wang Hai. Zhu Guang is a central committee member and a veteran commissar and organization cadre of the Second FA. After 1949, he served for many years in the cadres department of the GPD before entering the political organs of the regional Air Force. In the early eighties, Zhu returned briefly to Beijing to serve in the CMC DIC and again in the GPD cadres department before taking up his present post.

<sup>52</sup>Richard J. Latham and Kenneth W. Allen, "Defense Reform in China: The PLA Air Force," *Problems of Communism*, Vol. 40, May-June 1991, pp. 30-50.

<sup>53</sup>For example, Jiang Yutian, the commander of the Nanjing MR Air Force and an important figure in the PLAAF, is also a veteran Third FA cadre. See the Chapter 5 for further details. We should also note, however, that some well-informed observers of the PLA believe that Zhu Guang has become a supporter of Yang Baibing in recent years. The two Second FA veterans served in similar posts during much of their pre-1949 careers, which may have given them an opportunity to establish a personal bond, but their subsequent postings show little overlap.

gested by the fact that the PLA elder is now recognized as the founder of the PLAN. The date on which Zhang became naval commander of the East China MR (April 23, 1949) has been designated by the CMC as the Navy's founding day. The PLA Navy would almost certainly have objected to such a designation if it were not supportive of Zhang Aiping.<sup>54</sup>

### **Li Xuge and Xu Xin**

These two top members of the central military elite cannot be clearly linked to any of the above major and minor factional groupings. However, both officers are former Fifth FA cadres, with significant early experience in the Beijing MR, and thus may be linked to one another as associates of the Yang Dezhi/Fifth FA Faction. However, the careers of both men also exhibit evidence of secondary ties to Zhang Aiping, while Xu Xin is reportedly also very close to Yang Baibing. This suggests that both men could play a variety of supportive roles in future military involvement in politics, perhaps as a bridge between factions.

Li Xuge (b.1927), currently head of the Second Artillery (the unit commanding China's strategic missile and nuclear forces), is a professional staff officer with expertise in training and operations. Li probably spent most of his field military career with either the 63rd or 65th Corps of Yang Dezhi's 19th Army, under the Fifth FA system. He apparently served for many years in Korea as chief of a military training section, most likely within one of these units, still under Yang Dezhi. After returning to China, Li spent many years in the Military Operations Department of the GSD (from 1965 to 1982), interrupted only by a few years of service as a division commander in the early seventies, most likely with his old unit. Both the 63rd and the 65th Corps were stationed near Beijing after service in the Korean War and have remained in that area ever since, becoming the core of today's 63rd and 65th Group Armies of the Beijing MR. Li did not enter the Second Artillery until 1982, when he became a deputy commander. He was named commander of the Second Artillery in 1985.

Li Xuge's early affiliation with the Fifth FA system and his more recent service as a staff officer within the GSD suggest that he enjoys strong ties to the Yang Dezhi Faction, and also to Zhang Aiping, who was a leading cadre of the GSD during Li's tenure in that department.<sup>55</sup> Moreover, Li's links to the Yang Dezhi Faction are probably also reinforced by his likely association with Xu Xin (see below). Li probably also has the confidence of Deng Xiaoping (and perhaps Yang Shangkun), given the sensitivity of his post and the fact that he has held it for over five years. His loyalty to Deng may explain his election to the CCP CC at the 13th Party Congress in 1987. Although clearly an influential military leader, Li's role in any future pattern of PLA political involvement will probably be limited as long as he remains the head of a "noncore" sector of the military. Yet his close relationship to key PLA elders such as Yang Dezhi and Zhang Aiping could prove crucial to the maintenance of control over China's nuclear weapons in the future, if widespread conflict were to break out in China during an intensifying succession struggle.

GSD Deputy Director Xu Xin (b.1921) is a very senior member of the PLA officer corps who almost merits ranking as an elder. His career is a classic example of advancement through

<sup>54</sup>This last point was brought to the author's attention by a PLA analyst in Hong Kong.

<sup>55</sup>The possibility of a close relationship between Li Xuge and Zhang Aiping is suggested by the fact that Li accompanied Zhang in 1957 on a trip to choose the site for China's first nuclear weapons depot.

close association with a senior elder patron of the field army system, in this case Yang Dezhi. Xu's early military posts were as a combat unit commander in the Fifth FA, while in later years he developed an expertise in military intelligence and security work. He first served directly under Yang Dezhi in the late forties as a deputy division commander and division chief of staff within Yang's 19th Army. He was promoted to division commander and served in that capacity during the Korean War, no doubt with Yang's support. After graduating from the USSR Military Academy in 1957, Xu served until 1970 as deputy head of both the Training Department of the PLA Higher Military Academy and the Combined Operation Strategy Association. In this capacity, he probably strengthened earlier Fifth FA ties with Li Xuge, while developing his capabilities in military intelligence. During the seventies, Xu Xin held a series of army-level unit commands in the Beijing MR (perhaps as Li Xuge's superior?), becoming regional chief of staff by 1973. In 1980, he entered the GSD, serving shortly as an assistant to GSD Director Yang Dezhi before becoming deputy director in 1982, alongside Zhang Aiping. He is currently responsible for intelligence, strategy, and operations within the GSD, and reportedly played a major role in coordinating PLA activities during the Tiananmen crackdown. In addition to his GSD post, Xu has also served since 1987 as president of the Beijing Institute of International Strategic Studies (BISS), a grouping of senior military officers.

In addition to his ties to the Yang Dezhi Faction, Xu Xin is said to have cordial relations with Qin Jiwei, through service together in the Beijing MR, but is reportedly not on good terms with GSD Director Chi Haotian. If true, this would tend to weaken any ties Xu may have established with Zhang Aiping as a result of their joint service in the GSD in the early eighties. In addition, Xu has been described to the author by knowledgeable Chinese as having an abrasive personality. According to one very well-informed source in Beijing, he apparently clashed with Li Jijun over the latter's development of strategic deployment plans for military units in Inner Mongolia. Xu felt that Li was undermining his authority as the leading GSD cadre responsible for strategy and operations. Finally, to further add to the complexity of his personal links, some analysts believe that Xu has become a strong supporter of Yang Baibing in recent years, perhaps as a result of his expertise in military security and intelligence matters. He has been described by GSD sources as "Yang's right-hand man" on internal PLA security issues.<sup>56</sup>

Xu may soon be retired,<sup>57</sup> yet his knowledge and contacts suggest that he will no doubt continue to exert influence behind the scenes. Because of his apparent link to Qin Jiwei through service in the Beijing MR, Xu could possibly act as a bridge between the Yang Dezhi Faction and the Second FA elders, reinforcing other ties between these two groups. Conversely, he could throw his full support behind Yang Baibing if the latter continues to advance up the leadership hierarchy.

The above analysis suggests that professional and personal relations among the formal military leadership in Beijing reflect a complex, interlocking balance among China's most powerful party and military elders. Indeed, Deng Xiaoping may have supported the promotion of Yang Baibing, Chi Haotian, and Zhao Nanqi to leadership posts in the central

<sup>56</sup>This was related to the author by a very well-informed journalistic observer of PLA affairs in Hong Kong.

<sup>57</sup>Xu was an alternate member of the 12th CCP CC and then demoted to a mere representative of the 13th Party Congress in 1987. He has also been elected a member of the central advisory committee. Both moves signify that he is being slated for retirement.

departments in 1987 precisely in order to maintain stability among the three dominant elder factions: the Yang Shangkun Faction, the Zhang Aiping Faction, and the Deng Xiaoping Faction.

What else can be said about possible associations between the major PLA leadership factions in Beijing? As previously indicated, Yang Baibing's relationship with his military colleagues at the center is a highly controversial subject among analysts of the PLA. His relationship with Chi Haotian is particularly subject to dispute. Some analysts argue that Chi is a supporter of "moderate" professional commanders such as Qin Jiwei (on the basis of common service in the Beijing MR) and is opposed to the Yang Shangkun/Yang Baibing Faction,<sup>58</sup> despite his strong commissar credentials. According to at least two highly regarded Hong Kong sources, Yang Baibing and Yang Shangkun tried to replace Chi as GSD director with Liu Jingsong, commander of the Shenyang MR, following the Tiananmen crisis.<sup>59</sup> However, it is not possible to confirm that such conflict exists between Yang and Chi Haotian. In fact, Yang Baibing's ally, Zhou Keyu, may provide the basis for some degree of association with the Third FA Faction. Both Zhou and Chi Haotian served as company political instructors within detachments of the Third FA in the late forties, and both served as leading political officers within the Jinan MR, although not apparently at the same time.

Little is known about Yang Baibing's relationship with Zhao Nanqi. The careers of the two leaders suggest no common organizational link that might provide the basis for a direct association. However, a few indirect associations probably exist. Likely Yang Baibing supporters such as Liu Anyuan and Yu Yongbo could be linked to Zhao Nanqi through their common Fourth FA service, or, more likely, their likely common association with regional supporters of the Second FA elder faction, such as Zhang Wannian. Conversely, Li Jijun might serve as a link between Zhao and both Yang Shangkun and Yang Baibing. Finally, both Yangs may enjoy cordial relations with Zhao through their possible links to specific members of the elder Second FA Faction such as Liu Huaqing, although the nature of such ties is extremely unclear.

Other possible ties among central military factions include links between both the "Navy" and "Air Force" factions and the Third FA Faction, because of common unit affiliations, and as a result of all three factions' common interest in maintaining a strong emphasis on military modernization. This latter interest probably also provides the basis for an indirect link between the three factions and Zhao Nanqi, through his likely association with leading Second FA elders such as Liu Huaqing. This is reinforced, for the "Navy Faction," due to Liu's past strong links to that service arm. Finally, the two associates of the Yang Dezhi/Fifth FA Faction within the central military leadership (Li Xuge and Xu Xin) display indirect links with Zhao Nanqi (through Xu's apparent ties to Qin Jiwei), Chi Haotian (through Li's likely links to Zhang Aiping), and perhaps with Yang Baibing (based on Xu's involvement in intelligence and security work).

<sup>58</sup>This faction will hereafter usually be referred to as simply the Yang Shangkun Faction. Similarly, references to other leadership factions (e.g., the Third Field Army Faction) should hereafter be taken to include both elders and affiliated younger members of the formal PLA leadership.

<sup>59</sup>Tai Ming Cheung, "Gun-Barrel Politics," p. 17.



## 5. THE FORMAL LEADERSHIP: REGIONAL MILITARY GROUPINGS

This chapter analyzes the career backgrounds and likely personal relationships of the leaders of China's seven military regions, as well as the leaders of specific armed units in Beijing, including the Beijing Garrison Command, the PAP, and the Beijing Central Guard Unit (CGU).<sup>1</sup> Due to severe data limitations,<sup>2</sup> analysis of each leadership focuses on only the uppermost officers, in most cases the probable top members of the MR party committee. This usually includes the regional commanders and political commissars and their immediate subordinates, referred to as the "second ranking" leadership: deputy commanders and commissars, chiefs of staff, deputy chiefs of staff, and political department directors.<sup>3</sup> In addition, some very limited observations are made concerning group army commanders and political commissars.

In each case, career backgrounds are analyzed to assess personal linkages along four different dimensions: (1) upward links with possible patrons in Beijing (both active and retired); (2) downward links with subordinates within each military region; (3) internal links, among the members of each regional leadership; and (4) lateral links among regional leaders across military regions. In addition, general observations will be provided on the overall political and military significance of each military region, in relation to the central leadership structure in Beijing, and the role each military region played in the Tiananmen crisis.

The purpose of the analysis is twofold: (a) to generate hypotheses regarding the possible personal affiliations and influence of top regional leaders that can help evaluate their political significance as they continue up the career ladder or retire; and (b) to provide an overall assessment of the leadership dynamics of each military region as they relate to potential involvement in a future leadership crisis at the center.<sup>4</sup>

The analysis indicates that repeated personnel reshuffles and the promotion of younger officers to high-level posts have not resulted in the wholesale transformation of the regional military into pliant tools of the central leadership, as some students of the military believe. In the view of many observers of PLA politics, regional commanders and commissars no

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<sup>1</sup>A similar assessment of personal relationships within provincial and local reserve and militia forces is not included in this Report because of the lack of reliable data on their internal composition and leadership. However, the command and control structure governing such units is discussed in Chapter 6, since it is very likely that they would be called into service to deal with future domestic unrest.

<sup>2</sup>Career data on many regional PLA leaders are often insufficient or entirely absent, sometimes consisting only of current positions. Many individuals are too young to be included in standard compendiums of biographical data on the Chinese military elite. Moreover, few analysts of the PLA follow the regional military leadership in any systematic way, and no adequate database exists to track their careers.

<sup>3</sup>Complete listings of MR party committee members are not usually made public. This listing is based on general statements regarding likely committee membership at the MR level provided by interviewees. It excludes those members holding leading posts in the MR logistics departments, largely because such individuals are not regarded as major political players within the PLA.

<sup>4</sup>Because of the relatively large number of individuals examined, biographical details on all MR leaders are found in Appendix C. Only conclusions concerning likely personal affiliations are presented in the text. Particular attention is given to the affiliations of the MR commander and political commissar, as they constitute by far the most powerful figures within each region.

longer have the motivation or the ability to act as factional players in a future political crisis, and will thus behave much the same as their counterparts in the West, i.e., they will respond, as military professionals, to legitimate orders given by authorized leaders of the central government.

Close analysis of the career backgrounds and professional interactions of China's regional military leadership strongly suggests that the actual picture of the regional PLA leadership is far more complex. Most important, the vast majority of China's regional military leaders are old enough to have established meaningful personal ties to very influential PLA elders and other formal PLA leaders in Beijing. In other words, there is little evidence of a clear break between regional leaders and the military elite in Beijing. Both groups are part of the same general coterie of senior and lesser ranking veterans of the pre-1949 FA system. Thus, most, if not all, of today's "younger" regional commanders and commissars in their late fifties, sixties, and early seventies were promoted to the top of the regional command structure in large part as a result of the links they enjoy with the surviving PLA elders and their junior associates in the central departments.

Beyond this basic observation, however, examination of the regional military leadership also reveals more specific, internal fissures and political characteristics that could prove to be extremely important in a future succession struggle. The following seven are of particular significance:

- A preponderance of personal links to a single central faction, the Second FA elders, largely through past service by highly placed Beijing, Nanjing, Chengdu, and Lanzhou field officers to senior associates of Deng Xiaoping.<sup>5</sup>
- A sharp leadership division in the most politically important military region (Beijing) and the most reform-oriented military region (Guangzhou), largely between two factions.<sup>6</sup>
- A virtual absence of significant regional leadership ties with the Yang Dezhi/Fifth FA Faction.
- An internally cohesive, conservative, highly armed and strategically placed region (Shenyang) with weak organizational ties to the central PLA leadership and strong lateral ties to at least one other region (Guangzhou).
- A highly fragmented leadership structure with a relatively weak top leadership (Jinan).
- A highly professionalized region, with strong loyalties to both Wang Zhen and secondary ties to the Second FA elders, especially through Xiang Shouzhi and the Nanjing MR (Lanzhou).
- An overall concentration of Tiananmen veterans in the leadership of the Beijing, Shenyang, and Nanjing MRs.

<sup>5</sup>Moreover, of these four regions, the Nanjing leadership is without doubt the most capable of mobilizing internal support from subordinate officers to support Second FA elders. The other regions display a much less concentrated pattern of Second FA associates. Leaders within the Guangzhou MR might also be linked to the Second FA elders, but such a connection is not clearly evident in most of their careers.

<sup>6</sup>The split in the Beijing area is of particular importance, including officers and military organs associated with the Yangs (concentrated largely in the GPD, the CMC, and the Beijing PAP forces), and those individuals in the MR and Garrison Command associated with Beijing MR veteran Qin Jiwei.

## THE BEIJING AREA

The area in and around Beijing contains a large number of armed units either directly or indirectly under the control of the party leadership. These include the six group armies of the Beijing MR command and three much smaller and less well-armed groups of forces: the Beijing Garrison Command (formally charged with maintaining security within the capital), the Beijing PAP General Unit and Second General Unit under the PAP General Headquarters (GHQ) (largely responsible for protecting buildings and structures of political and strategic importance to the leadership and for suppressing public protests), and the Central Guard Unit (responsible for the security of the top party leadership). The leaders of these armed units may exert decisive influence over the nature and extent of military involvement in any future succession struggle.

**The Beijing Military Region.** This region (commanding the Beijing Garrison and the Hebei, Shanxi, and Nei Menggu Military Districts) is by far the most important and powerful of China's seven military regions. It contains six group armies (the most in any military region), including some of the best equipped and most highly trained ground forces in China. Most are located within 200 miles of Beijing.<sup>7</sup> The 24th Group Army is based in northeast Hebei, the 27th GA in southern Hebei, the 28th GA in northern Shanxi, the 38th GA in central Hebei, the 63rd GA in eastern Shanxi, and the 65th GA in northwest Hebei. The former three group armies evolved from units of the Third FA, while the 38th is part of the Fourth FA system. Both the 63rd and the 65th were formerly part of the Fifth (North China) FA.

Units attached to these group armies were more heavily involved in the Tiananmen crack-down than those of any other military region. Each of the six group armies contributed forces to the operation, and units from the Beijing MR stayed the longest in the capital after June 5. The 24th GA sent a very significant force of undetermined size, while the 27th and 28th GAs sent elements of at least one division each. The elite 38th GA committed several units to martial law duty, including the 112th and 113th Mechanized Infantry Divisions, one tank division, at least one artillery brigade and an engineer regiment. The 63rd GA had elements of at least two infantry divisions in the martial law forces, as well as a signal regiment. Finally, the 65th GA sent elements of at least one division to Beijing. Units of the 38th and 24th GAs were especially notable for their involvement in the violent suppression of demonstrators. The former spearheaded the assault on Tiananmen Square from the west during the night of June 3-4.<sup>8</sup>

Moreover, the headquarters of the Beijing Military Region apparently served as a "forward command post" for the Martial Law Headquarters during the crisis. All of the armed units that moved on Tiananmen Square on the night of June 3-4, 1989, apparently received their orders from this command post. It also exercised operational control over PAP units during the crisis, while the logistics department of the military region was active in overseeing the treatment and forwarding of wounded soldiers. Finally, the Beijing MR also directed the

<sup>7</sup>See the map in Appendix I.

<sup>8</sup>We are grateful to Ellis Melvin for providing detailed information on the activities of PLA units during the Tiananmen crisis, based on his meticulous reading of a wide range of Chinese sources.

Beijing Garrison in providing signal communication support for the operation and in placing security guards at key locations.<sup>9</sup>

The Beijing MR leadership underwent considerable changes during the 1990 personnel reshuffles. Nine of twelve top officers were newly appointed to their posts in mid/late 1990 and early 1991, including the commander and political commissar, the chief of staff, three of four deputy commanders, one deputy political commissar, one deputy chief of staff, and the political department director.<sup>10</sup> However, almost all were from within the region. Overall, at least six of the uppermost members of the second-ranking leadership (Chief of Staff Huang Yunqiao, Deputy Commander and concurrent Beijing Garrison Commander Dong Xuelin, Deputy Commander Li Laizhu, Deputy Commander and concurrent Regional Air Force Commander Yao Xian, Deputy Commander Zou Yuqi, and Deputy Political Commissar Chen Peimin) have served within the region since at least the mid-eighties and probably much longer in some cases. At least three others (Deputy Political Commissar Wang Fuyi, Political Department Director Cao Heqing, and Deputy Chief of Staff Wu Shuangzhan) are former regional group army leaders and thus probably also veterans of the Beijing MR.

Since Tiananmen, many observers of Chinese leadership politics have attempted to assess the political loyalties and factional networks of the Beijing MR leadership. Some current and former PLA members insist that Yang Baibing's position in the Beijing MR is extremely strong, and that he is supported by every major regional leader. Support for Yang is said to derive, in part, from the fact that many current regional leaders played a central role in carrying out the Tiananmen crackdown. Specifically, five of the top twelve regional leaders attained their present posts largely because of loyalty to the regime displayed during the Tiananmen crisis, including the political commissar (Zhang Gong), two deputy political commissars (Chen Peimin and Wang Fuyi), the political department director (Cao Heqing), and a deputy chief of staff (Wu Shuangzhan). At least eight other leading officers of the Beijing MR at the group army or military district level also apparently participated in Tiananmen.<sup>11</sup>

In contrast to this view, other analysts assert that loyalties among the top leadership of the military region are divided between Yang Baibing and other major military figures associated with the region such as Qin Jiwei. They also insist that a majority of subordinate officers are likely opposed to both Yang Baibing and Yang Shangkun, thus presenting a picture of a politically divided and hence potentially unstable region.

Our analysis of the regional leadership and our discussions with informants in China and Hong Kong suggest that the latter view is closer to the truth. Despite undoubted links to

<sup>9</sup>We are grateful to Ellis Melvin for providing information on the activities of the Beijing MR command during Tiananmen.

<sup>10</sup>See Appendix C for the dates these individuals were first identified in their current posts.

<sup>11</sup>These include: Zhang Baokang (political commissar of the Beijing Garrison), Zhang Meiyuan (commander of the 38th GA), Zhu Zengquan (political commissar of the 27th GA), Huang Xinsong (deputy commander of the 27th GA), Zang Wenqing (commander of the 63rd GA), Diao Congzhou (commander of the Nei Menggu MD), Gao Yunjiang (deputy commander of the Beijing Garrison), and Ren Fengjie (deputy director of the regional political department). Most of these individuals have remained in their posts since Tiananmen. Zhang Baokang was political department director of the Nanjing MR's 12th GA during Tiananmen. Gao Yunjiang was commander of the Shenyang MR's 40th GA, while Ren Fengjie was deputy political commissar of the 63rd GA and concurrently secretary of the GA Discipline Inspection Department.

Yang Baibing through Tiananmen service, there is little doubt that several former leaders of the Beijing MR (and Qin Jiwei's close associates) displayed great hesitancy during the Tiananmen crisis, including officers of the 28th and 38th GAs.<sup>12</sup> In addition, large numbers of lower ranking officers and soldiers from the Beijing Garrison Command and the PAP participated in the demonstrations of April–May 1989. Moreover, the regional command (and the central PLA departments in Beijing) are said to contain a significant number of better educated, reform-minded junior officers strongly supportive of military modernization and generally opposed to the subsequent attempt to reinject political norms into the PLA.<sup>13</sup> Perhaps most important, analysis of the backgrounds and resulting likely affiliations of the uppermost members of the Beijing MR suggests a split between a dominant group of Yang Baibing supporters and a weaker group of officers affiliated with specific Second FA elders such as Qin Jiwei, as well as significant secondary links to the Zhang Aiping/Third FA Faction. This division is reflected most clearly in the top two leadership posts within the region.

The new commander of the Beijing MR is Wang Chengbin. He is a member of the 13th CCP Central Committee, a long-term veteran of the Third FA system and of East China and thus an outsider to the region. Wang was promoted to head the Beijing MR after serving five years (from 1985) as deputy commander of the Nanjing MR. Prior to that time, his military career was almost certainly spent as a field commander within units of the 31st Corps, which formed the core of the 31st Group Army based in Fujian. Wang's relationship with the Yangs is a source of some controversy. Hong Kong and Japanese newspapers characterize him as a hardliner enjoying a close relationship with Yang Baibing.<sup>14</sup> However, another usually reliable source suggests that he is politically "neutral," while some analysts believe he may be opposed to the Yangs because of his close ties to former Nanjing MR commander Xiang Shouzhi (see the section on Nanjing, below), who is apparently not liked by Yang Shangkun.<sup>15</sup>

Wang's career prior to 1990 did not intersect with either Yang Baibing or Yang Shangkun, and it is very likely that he is much closer to other leaders at the center, and to several top regional officers. Xiang Shouzhi is probably his closest associate, given their many years of service together in Nanjing during the late eighties. Through Xiang Shouzhi, Wang also probably enjoys close links with other members of the Second FA Faction, especially Qin Jiwei (who served as Xiang's superior during the Civil War and the Korean War). Wang probably enjoys secondary ties with supporters of the Zhang Aiping/Third FA Faction,

<sup>12</sup>Apparently, the commander of the 38th GA, Xu Qinxian, was relieved of duty prior to June 3, 1989, for attempting to avoid the implementation of martial law orders. He claimed illness and was admitted to a hospital after the announcement of martial law. He was reportedly placed on trial and sentenced to a prison term many months after the conclusion of the crisis.

<sup>13</sup>Yang Baibing personally convened several meetings of personnel from the Beijing MR in early 1990, to stress the need for the region to display total loyalty to central party directives. See Beijing Domestic Service, January 23, 1990, in *FBIS-CHI*, January 26, 1990, p. 30; Xinhua Domestic Service, February 24, 1990, in *FBIS-CHI*, February 26, 1990, p. 26; and Xinhua Domestic Service, February 24, 1990, in *FBIS-CHI*, 1 March 1990, pp. 30–31.

<sup>14</sup>For example, see *Sankei Shimbun*, May 24, 1990, p. 5; and *Hong Kong Standard*, June 29, 1990, p. 7, in *FBIS-CHI*, July 11, 1990, p. 11.

<sup>15</sup>*Tangtai*, No. 45, October 6, 1990, pp. 24–25, translated in *FBIS-CHI*, October 17, 1990, pp. 26–28; and interviews with U.S. government PLA analysts, Washington, D.C. According to some observers, Xiang reportedly incurred the opposition of the Yangs by joining with Zhang Wannian in opposing Yang Shangkun's attempt to supplant Zhao Ziyang as CMC vice chairman prior to Tiananmen. This has not been confirmed.

because of his early service in the Third FA system. In fact, Chi Haotian has been named by at least one source as a close associate.<sup>16</sup> This certainly seems plausible, given the similar combat service of both men as company-level officers in the Third FA during the late forties. Additional secondary ties between Wang and regional leaders within the Nanjing and Jinan MRs may also exist on the basis of common service within the former Fuzhou MR. For example, Song Qingwei, currently political commissar of Jinan, is almost certainly a close associate.<sup>17</sup> Thus, overall, Wang can probably be viewed as a supporter of both the Second FA Faction and the Zhang Aiping/Chi Haotian Faction in the central leadership. Whether or not he is opposed to the Yangs probably depends ultimately on Xiang Shouzhi's relationship to those two leaders.

Political Commissar Zhang Gong is the youngest regional leader and one of the most junior in party status (he was merely a deputy to the 13th Party Congress). A native of Shanxi, Zhang's entire career has been spent as a political cadre within offices of the Beijing MR headquarters. He is undoubtedly closely linked to Yang Baibing, who reportedly engineered his very rapid rise during the eighties. However, because he has never served within combat units, Zhang probably enjoys little support from subordinate regional officers, despite his long service within the region. Moreover, his jump in 1990 from political department director to political commissar probably antagonized those more senior political officers within the region. Finally, Zhang is almost certainly disliked by both pro-reform officers and those individuals opposed to the Tiananmen crackdown. He was head of the political department of the Martial Law Command Headquarters and a frequent spokesman for hardline views during the crisis, and has often defended the actions of the PLA at that time.

None of the second-ranking leadership of the Beijing MR possess any career links to commander Wang Chengbin, while at least two are probably linked to political commissar Zhang Gong and Yang Baibing: Deputy Political Commissar Wang Fuyi and Political Department Director Cao Heqing, both with Tiananmen service. Other possible Yang associates include Deputy Political Commissar Chen Peimin and Deputy Chief of Staff Wu Shuangzhan. Both were leading participants in Tiananmen and former group army political commissars. Of the two officers, Wu is probably more closely linked to Yang Baibing, assuming he enjoys close ties with PAP head Zhou Yushu, his former superior in the 24th Group Army and reportedly a very close Yang associate. Chen appears to be at the end of his career. Three leading second-rank officers are probably close to former Regional Commander and Political Commissar Qin Jiwei: Deputy Commander Li Laizhu, Deputy Commander Zou Yuqi, and, to a lesser degree, Chief of Staff Huang Yunqiao. But it is unlikely that these individuals enjoy much influence within the region.<sup>18</sup> Deputy Commander Dong Xuelin may also be a Qin associate, largely because of his long service in the region.

<sup>16</sup>*Tungtai*, No. 45, pp. 24-25.

<sup>17</sup>See the section below on the Jinan MR leadership for details.

<sup>18</sup>Li Laizhu's relatively diverse regional career and close involvement with military schools in recent years suggest that he may not enjoy a strong support base within military units in the Beijing Military Region. His career successes may have been primarily due to his upward connections, probably with Deng Xiaoping, and almost certainly with Qin Jiwei, since his career path closely parallels that of the latter. Although most likely a veteran of the region, Zou Yuqi's career also does not suggest that he enjoys the sort of strong, downward links with combat unit commanders that many other regional leaders obtained as a result of their promotion through the ranks. Huang Yunqiao served previously as deputy chief of staff, suggesting that he may be a veteran professional commander of the region.

All of the identifiable leaders of the Beijing MR group armies were promoted to their current posts from within the region and are thus probably Beijing veterans. Almost half were promoted from within the group army they currently lead. At least four leaders (Commander Huang Kinsheng and Political Commissar Zhu Zengquan of the 27th Group Army, Commander Zhang Meiyuan of the 38th Group Army, and Commander Zang Wenqing of the 63rd Group Army) are former Tiananmen participants, along with several other subordinate group army and military district leaders, noted above. It is very difficult to estimate personal affiliations among these leaders. Most group army commanders are probably associated with Qin Jiwei as a result of his long service as Beijing MR commander and his strong ties to Deng Xiaoping, which most likely gave Qin exceptional influence over the promotion of upper-level unit commanders. Similarly, group army commissars may be linked to Yang Baibing, as suggested above, but the association is probably much weaker than between Qin and the GA commanders. Yang never served as a political officer among combat units of the region, and was Beijing MR political commissar for only two years, from 1985 to 1987.

Overall, the Beijing MR may prove to be the most internally divided and politically unstable military region in China in a post-Deng setting, if leading Second FA elders come out in opposition to the Yangs. It is not surprising that Yang Shangkun called for greater unity within the Beijing MR in an address to its leadership during the personnel reshuffles of 1990.<sup>19</sup>

**The Beijing Garrison Command.** This unit almost certainly remains under the control of the Beijing MR, despite at least one recent report to the contrary.<sup>20</sup> As with the regional leadership, most top members of the Beijing Garrison were placed in their positions after Tiananmen. Only two individuals among the top ten leaders of the garrison have held their posts since before June 1989.<sup>21</sup> This stands in contrast to the situation in the Tianjin Garrison Command, where only the commander, commissar, deputy commissar, and chief of staff were replaced.<sup>22</sup>

Little career information is available on the leaders of the Beijing Garrison. The new commander (Dong Xuelin) and new political commissar (Zhang Baokang) are both from outside the unit, and from very different backgrounds. The former officer is almost certainly a long-term veteran of the Beijing MR with extensive service in the Beijing area as former commander of the Hebei Military District. He apparently did not participate in Tiananmen. The latter officer was formerly political department director of the 12th Group Army within the Nanjing Military Region and is probably a veteran of that region. He was a participant in the Tiananmen crackdown.

<sup>19</sup>Cited in *Tangtai*, No. 45, p. 25.

<sup>20</sup>One former officer of the PLA informed the author that the Beijing Garrison was placed under the command of the Beijing PAP Headquarters after Tiananmen. However, this seems very doubtful. Such a claim has not been confirmed by other reliable sources, and conflicts with existing facts concerning the two separate command and control systems utilized by the PAP and the municipal garrison commands (see Chapter 6).

<sup>21</sup>These are Li Ximing, the first political commissar and secretary of the Beijing Municipal Party Committee, and Wang Yancheng, a deputy political commissar.

<sup>22</sup>Because of data and space limitations, we do not discuss the Tianjin Garrison leadership. Moreover, they almost certainly will not play as important a role in any future pattern of PLA political involvement as the Beijing Garrison.

Both Dong and Zhang were undoubtedly chosen to command the garrison because of their loyalty to the current leadership (and, in the case of Dong, his likely contribution to the strengthening of its riot control functions).<sup>23</sup> Zhang Baokang's regional background in East China suggests that he is most likely associated with senior PLA leaders such as Fu Kuiqing and Xiang Shouzhi, which would probably link him to Wang Chengbin, and both the Second FA Faction and the Zhang Aiping/Third FA Faction. Dong Xuelin's regional background suggests a possible link to Qin Jiwei, as mentioned above, although more information is needed to confirm this.

Even less information is available on the backgrounds of the second-ranking leaders of the Beijing garrison, but some of them may be associated with the Yangs, in apparent contrast to the commander and political commissar. Most seem to be veterans of the region, although not of the garrison (with at least one notable exception). The new senior deputy commander, Gao Yunjiang, was formerly commander of the Shenyang MR's 40th Group Army, and participated in that capacity in the Tiananmen crackdown. The remaining deputy commander, Senior Colonel Qin Tao, was promoted from within the garrison. He had commanded its Third Division. Deputy Political Commissar Huang Xiangchu was formerly director of the mass work department within the region's political department and may thus be linked to Yang Baibing. Chief of Staff Gao Zongwu was previously commander of an unidentified division within the region's 63rd Group Army. Finally, Chen Jinbiao, political department director, was formerly a divisional political commissar within the 38th Group Army prior to his promotion during the 1990 reshuffles. His somewhat unusual promotion (skipping one level) may have resulted from Yang Baibing's support. It is very likely that all of these leaders participated in Tiananmen, but further information is needed to confirm this.

**People's Armed Police General Headquarters.** The leadership of the Beijing PAP GHQ is more politically significant than that of the Beijing Garrison, given the PAP's overall enhanced role in handling popular unrest within China's major cities (see Chapter 6). The entire PAP GHQ leadership down to the deputy chief of staff level was replaced during the 1990 reshuffles, primarily by professional PLA officers from within the Beijing MR. Unlike the Garrison Command, its top leadership is probably closely affiliated with the Yangs. Commander Zhou Yushu was formerly the commander of the 24th Group Army, while Political Commissar Xu Shouzeng previously served as deputy director of the Beijing MR political department. Both men are considered very close to Yang Baibing. Another possible Yang supporter is Li Zhiyuan, PAP political department director and former head of the same department within the 38th Group Army. Other leading officers from PLA units outside the Beijing MR include Deputy Commander Zuo Yinsheng (former deputy head of the PLAAF 15th Airborne Army) and Chief of Staff Jin Renxie (a former group army deputy commander, probably from the 67th Group Army of the Jinan MR). Their likely personal affiliations are unknown. All of these PAP leaders were veterans of Tiananmen, except possibly Xu Shouzeng. Finally, Deputy Commander Wang Wenli was promoted from within the PAP. He had been chief of staff. New Deputy Political Commissar Lu Shouyuan previously served as political commissar of the Second PLA Medical University.

<sup>23</sup>Military districts play a very important role in the command and control structure governing local units charged with controlling popular unrest. See Chapter 6.



The PAP has two general units (*zongdui*) responsible for security within the capital: the Beijing PAP General Unit (PAP GU) and the recently formed Second Beijing PAP General Unit (Second GU).<sup>24</sup> Both are directly under the operational command of the PAP GHQ and thus ultimately of the CMC. The two general units command at least nineteen PAP regimental-level detachments (*zhidui*), totaling over 20,000 men. In the past, most members of the Beijing PAP GU were assigned to guard important buildings and facilities within the capital, although some units apparently had a limited mobile capability (see below). In contrast, the Second GU, formed on December 28, 1989, is intended to serve solely as a crack mobile force, apparently designed to play the lead role in maintaining security in the capital.<sup>25</sup> In addition to its mobile capabilities, the unit has undoubtedly been made more effective as a tool in controlling social unrest by acquiring better riot control training and equipment, as with other PAP units throughout China's major cities. Chinese sources state that the Second GU was formerly under the direct leadership of the PLA and was responsible for guarding the northern border region of China.<sup>26</sup> This suggests that it may be an elite unit, probably from the 24th GA, transferred to Beijing and incorporated, intact, into the PAP command structure in the capital.

The Beijing PAP GU experienced significant post-Tiananmen leadership changes. Only Commander Zhang Wenqi and Deputy Commander Meng Zhende remained in place after June 1989. However, the latter became commander in early 1992, while the former was last seen in April 1991 and is thus probably no longer with the unit. Unfortunately, little is known about the backgrounds of its current leadership, but most were probably promoted from within the unit. The unit apparently performed well during Tiananmen, despite its limited capabilities at the time. Some of its mobile companies and battalions apparently were attached to regular PLA units during the crisis as anti-riot units. They were used to clear roadblocks obstructing the advance of the military. In addition, the First Regiment of the PAP GU took part in the clearing of Tiananmen Square on the night of June 3-4. During these activities, PAP GU units were directly integrated into the overall command structure for regular group army units participating in the crackdown.<sup>27</sup>

The Second GU is commanded by Ma Zixin and its political commissar is Chen Xianzhi.<sup>28</sup> No information is available on the backgrounds of these men, but both are almost certainly professional PLA officers who formerly served with the unit on the border. They are probably veterans of the 24th GA.

**Central Guard Unit.** The last important armed unit located within the Beijing area is the Central Guard Unit (CGU), previously known as the 8341 Unit.<sup>29</sup> This detachment of elite troops, charged with the defense of the top leadership, is strategically placed in the capital to guard the Western Hills command complex and the personal homes of the members of the

<sup>24</sup>Note that the original general unit in the capital is still called the Beijing PAP General Unit, not the First Beijing PAP General Unit. None of the other provincial-level municipalities, provinces, or autonomous regions have two general units of internal defense troops.

<sup>25</sup>See *People's Public Security Daily*, January 25, 1992, p. 3.

<sup>26</sup>*People's Public Security Daily*, January 25, 1992, p. 3.

<sup>27</sup>We are again grateful to Ellis Melvin for providing much of the information contained in this paragraph.

<sup>28</sup>*People's Public Security Daily*, January 25, 1992, p. 3.

<sup>29</sup>The unit reportedly has a new, five-digit designation, unknown to the author.

politburo and central committee. Estimates of its size vary considerably; some Hong Kong PLA-watchers believe it contains only 7,000 to 8,000 men, while others assert that it comprises at least two divisions, which would give it a strength roughly equal to the PAP forces in the capital.

The CGU is under the nominal control of the Central Guard Bureau, a unit of the CCP CC General Office. Actually, the unit historically has been under the personal control of the supreme leader of the party and commanded by an individual deemed personally loyal to that leader alone. During most of the fifties, sixties, and seventies, Wang Dongxing commanded the 8341 Unit as Mao Zedong's trusted aide. Wang had been Mao's chief bodyguard during the mid-forties. Yang Dezhong currently commands the unit. He is considered highly loyal to Deng Xiaoping, but also reportedly enjoys very good relations with Yang Shangkun. He is a career political officer, and has served within various departments of the Central Guard Bureau since 1953. Little else is known about his background, however, or that of other CGU leaders. They could eventually play a major role in a future elite crisis by controlling access to the PLA command and control center in the Western Hills (see Chapter 6). Wang Dongxing reportedly played such a key role during the immediate post-Mao period.<sup>30</sup>

## THE SHENYANG MILITARY REGION

The Shenyang MR is the second most important military region in China, containing the Heilongjiang, Jilin, and Liaoning Military Districts of Northeast China. Historically, the region has played a central role in defending the nation against the former Soviet Union, but also contains very large armed forces relatively close to Beijing. It commands a total of five group armies, only one less than those within the Beijing MR, yet contains more tank divisions and artillery brigades than Beijing. The 23rd GA is based in Heilongjiang Province and the 16th GA is based in Jilin (near the border with Russia), while the 39th, 40th, and 64th Group Armies are all based farther south, in Liaoning Province. The field army lineage of Shenyang's group armies is highly diverse. The 39th and 40th GAs are part of the Fourth FA system, while the 64th was originally part of the Fifth (North China) FA. The 23rd GA was originally formed from units of the Third FA, while the 16th was with the Second FA. The region also contains one naval base for the North Fleet (the other is in the Jinan MR).

Probably because of their proximity to the capital, units of the 39th, 40th, and 64th GAs played a very significant role in the Tiananmen crisis, second only to units from the Beijing MR. They arrived in the capital just after those from Beijing, and participated centrally in violent confrontations with demonstrators leading to the clearing of Tiananmen Square. The 39th and 40th GAs had elements of at least two infantry divisions within the martial law forces, while the 64th GA had elements of at least one division. The 39th GA advanced on Tiananmen Square from the east during the night of June 3-4, while the 40th GA advanced from the south. Units of the 64th GA secured the northern suburbs of the capital.<sup>31</sup> The 23rd and 16th GAs apparently did not participate in Tiananmen.

<sup>30</sup>According to one former member of the PLA with long service in Beijing, Chairman Mao had apparently designated Wang as the "gatekeeper" for the command center during his last years. It was Wang's association with PLA Marshal Ye Jianying after Mao's death in September 1976 that led to the latter's successful overthrow of the Gang of Four. It is not known if Yang Dezhong has been given a similar designation by Deng.

<sup>31</sup>Ellis Melvin, personal correspondence.

Both of the top officers in charge of Shenyang's forces during Tiananmen (former MR Deputy Commander Zhu Dunfa and former MR Deputy Political Commissar Li Wenqing) were promoted to important posts outside the region. Zhu became Guangzhou MR commander, while Li became deputy political commissar of the NDU under Zhang Zhen.<sup>32</sup> Despite such outward transfers, the number of Tiananmen veterans remaining among the current Shenyang leadership is second only to those within the Beijing MR. Some Shenyang veterans of Tiananmen have kept their posts, while others have been promoted within the region and a few have been transferred laterally to occupy leading positions at the provincial military district level, probably to improve the riot control capabilities of the militia and local PAP forces. Overall, most remaining Tiananmen veterans within the Shenyang MR are located at the group army and military district command levels.<sup>33</sup>

Overall, the top Shenyang leadership was only moderately altered during the 1990 reshuffles. Seven of eleven top officers were reassigned, but almost all were promoted from within the region. Shenyang was the only region to retain both its commander and political commissar. Both are long-term veterans of the region, although probably from different group armies. Liu Jingsong is China's youngest regional commander (born in 1933) and a full member of the 12th and 13th Central Committees. He was promoted from commander of the 64th Corps to his present post in 1985, thus skipping one rank. Liu's military career prior to his promotion into the regional command was spent entirely as a professional infantry officer, probably within units of the 64th Corps, which formed the basis of the 64th Group Army in 1985. None of Liu's six regional counterparts have as strong a connection to their regions. He did not participate in the Korean War, but did serve in Vietnam during the sixties, probably with units of the 64th Corps. Because Liu did not enter the PLA until after 1949 and has spent his career within the Shenyang MR, his background suggests no early, field army-based links to PLA elders. However, his pattern of promotion within the region (including his jump from the corps to the regional leadership level) and his early membership in the central committee certainly suggest an association with Li Desheng. Li took command of the Shenyang MR in 1973, just before Liu was promoted to top positions within the 64th Corps. Moreover, Li was the political commissar of the NDU when Liu attended a two-month advanced course at the university in 1989.

Political Commissar Song Keda is also a long-term veteran of the Shenyang MR, most likely associated with the 39th Corps, which formed the basis of the 39th Group Army. Song was appointed MR political commissar in December 1987, shortly after becoming an alternate member of the 13th Central Committee. He probably enjoys very close ties with Liu Zhenhua (b.1921), a senior PLA officer and long-time Shenyang political cadre who retired during the 1990 reshuffles after serving three years as political commissar of the Beijing MR. However, Liu's influence within the military at present is highly problematic. He has not been seen since Tiananmen, and may have been forced to take responsibility, along with former

<sup>32</sup>Li Wenqing is not a Shenyang MR veteran. He emerged from the Third FA system and served for many years in the Nanjing MR.

<sup>33</sup>Wu Jiamin (former commander of the 40th Group Army) became regional chief of staff; Gao Yunjiang became deputy commander of the Beijing Garrison; Zheng Shunzhou has remained as political commissar of the 40th GA; Zhang Chuanmiao was promoted from deputy political commissar to political commissar of the 64th GA; Ma Shenglin (formerly political commissar of the 39th GA) was transferred to serve as political commissar of the Liaoning MD; and Xiang Jingyuan (former commander of the 64th GA) was transferred to command the Liaoning MD.

Beijing MR Commander Zhou Yibing (b.1922), for the apparent hesitation displayed in May-June 1989 by their subordinates within the region. Song may also have a secondary tie to Xu Huizi, currently a deputy chief of the GSD. Xu was commander of the 39th Corps when Song was political commissar in the early eighties. However, Song probably relies primarily on his undoubtedly weaker ties with Li Desheng, which might place him at a disadvantage to Liu Jingsong. While his lower party ranking indeed suggests subordination to Liu in status, Song nevertheless serves as secretary of the MR party committee. Liu is deputy secretary.

Almost all second-ranking members of the Shenyang MR have spent their military careers either entirely or in large part within the region. These include Deputy Commanders Shi Baoyuan and Cao Shuangming, Deputy Political Commissar Dai Xuejiang, Chief of Staff Wu Jiamin, Political Department Director Huang Jianhong, Deputy Chiefs of Staff Zong Shunliu and Huang Zaiyu, and probably Deputy Chief of Staff Zhao Shufeng. Deputy Political Commissar Ai Weiren is a former "southern" Fourth FA cadre who spent time in Southwest China before returning to Shenyang during the 1990 reshuffles.<sup>34</sup> Only one member of the regional leadership appears to be a complete outsider: Deputy Commander Tong Baocun, from Jinan. In addition, almost all second-ranking leaders are professional field officers. They were all promoted from division to corps level posts within the Shenyang MR in the early eighties, and then to posts at the regional level in the mid-eighties.

When viewed against the backgrounds of Liu Jingsong and Song Keda, these career patterns not only suggest an unequaled level of internal cohesiveness and regional affiliation among leading Shenyang officers, but also a common link to Li Desheng, and perhaps to Liu Zhenhua, yet few ties, overall, to central leaders. The only identifiable link to a leading PLA officer in Beijing is to Xu Huizi, a deputy chief of the GSD,<sup>35</sup> and perhaps to Zhao Nanqi, as a result of his long service in Jilin. The common internal regional affiliation seen in the backgrounds of the top Shenyang leadership is also found at the group army level. All of Shenyang's group army commanders and political commissars are products of the region. Moreover, seven out of ten GA leaders were promoted to their current posts during the 1990 reshuffles.

Finally, the Shenyang leadership may enjoy relatively strong personal links with the leaders of some other military regions, based essentially on common service within the northeast. The most important of these links are with the Guangzhou MR, through Zhu Dunfa and Zhang Zhongxian (commander and political commissar of the Guangzhou MR), and Fang Zuqi (Guangzhou political department director).<sup>36</sup> Much less significant associations might exist with the Jinan MR leadership (through Yang Guoping, regional chief of staff), and the Nanjing MR leadership (through Pei Jiuzhou, a deputy political commissar). All these officers were transferred in recent years from Shenyang. Less likely associates in other regions include Gu Hui (commander of the Nanjing MR), Chen Peimin (deputy political

<sup>34</sup>See below for a definition of the "northern" and "southern" Fourth FA cadres.

<sup>35</sup>Xu is a former commander of the 39th Corps and a likely long-term veteran of that unit. He has been a party central committee member since 1982. In the early eighties, Xu served alongside Corps Political Commissar Song Keda and above Corps Chief of Staff Zong Shunliu. Some analysts believe he is slated to succeed Chi Haotian as GSD director. Such a move might give the Shenyang MR a powerful ally at the top of the military hierarchy. However, a more detailed examination of Xu Huizi's career is required in order to confirm his likely factional ties with Shenyang.

<sup>36</sup>An assessment of the significance of such links is presented below.

commissar of the Beijing MR), and Cao Pengsheng (political commissar of the Lanzhou MR). Although all are Fourth FA cadres, these three officers spent most of their careers outside Shenyang, after only brief periods of service in the northeast.

While enjoying unrivaled cohesiveness as a regional elite, the Shenyang leadership also displays significant internal diversity. Most top members of the Shenyang leadership are veterans of different combat units (e.g., Commander Liu Jingsong is from the 64th Corps; Political Commissar Song Keda emerged from the 39th Corps; Chief of Staff Wu Jiamin is a veteran of the 40th Corps; Deputy Commander Shi Baoyuan is a career armored officer; and Deputy Political Commissar Dai Xuejiang is from the 23rd Corps). Moreover, the top leadership of all group armies, except possibly the 16th, is also apparently balanced between a veteran of the unit and an officer from another group army. This at least suggests an attempt by Beijing (or Li Desheng) to balance regional leaders against one another, perhaps as a way of partially reducing the dangers presented by the region's overall cohesiveness in leadership personnel. If true, it would also indicate that corps and group army affiliation has indeed become a central factor in the formation of basic factional alliances in the PLA.<sup>37</sup>

How does one explain this apparent anomaly of a powerful and internally cohesive regional military structure existing on Beijing's doorstep, without extensive personal links to the current central party and military leadership? Some analysts suggest that Shenyang's "special" status derives from its historical significance as the former bastion of Lin Biao's Fourth Field Army, by far the largest of the Chinese field armies and the dominant military force in Northeast China during the Chinese Civil War. According to this view, many former members of the Fourth FA system holding positions throughout the PLA are assumed to lend special support to Shenyang. As an example of the strength of Fourth FA ties in influencing Beijing's personnel decisions, analysts sometimes point to the high number of Shenyang cadres transferred to the Guangzhou Military Region, a second bastion of Fourth FA influence resulting from the pattern of military occupation existing at the end of the Civil War.<sup>38</sup>

However, this theory of Fourth Field Army dominance is not very convincing. As noted in earlier chapters, the leadership of the Fourth FA system was the most internally diverse of all the field armies. Formed from many disparate units during the forties, its members then split into two major groupings after the Korean War, a "northern" contingent based in Shenyang and a "southern" contingent located in the former Wuhan MR and the Guangzhou MR. Until recent years, very little personnel interaction took place between these distant regions. Moreover, some leading Shenyang cadres transferred to Guangzhou, such as former Deputy Commander Zhu Dunfa, are not from the Fourth FA system (see our discussion of Guangzhou, below), while long-term Shenyang commanders such as Chen Xilian and Li Desheng are not Fourth FA veterans of any type. While the northeast served as a staging and training area for the Fourth FA during the Civil War of the late forties, its control over

<sup>37</sup>The diversity of unit backgrounds among the Shenyang leadership could also have resulted from a "natural" process of promoting the most talented officers from each of Shenyang's many corps structures. Although this seems unlikely, given the known propensity of Chinese leaders to balance their subordinates against one another, it cannot be discounted, given existing data limitations.

<sup>38</sup>After defeating the Nationalist Chinese in the northeast, the forces of the Fourth FA played a major role in the subsequent conquest of South China, and its leaders assumed top posts in the party-state-military apparatus after 1949. As a result, many "southern" Fourth FA leaders managed to establish and maintain dominance among military (and sometimes party) postings in Central and South China until at least the highpoint of the Cultural Revolution in the late sixties. See Whitson, 1973, p. 324.

Shenyang after 1949 was increasingly undermined by the introduction of units and leaders from other field armies during the fifties.<sup>39</sup> Today, only two of Shenyang's five group armies were formerly part of the Fourth FA system. Moreover, as noted above, many of the region's leaders today are veterans of non-Fourth FA corps. Finally, since the death of Lin Biao and the purge of many of his followers in 1971, few members of the Fourth FA elite have held powerful positions within the PLA, and particularly not in Beijing. Thus, it is more likely that the Shenyang MR's apparent uniqueness derives from other factors.

Shenyang's personnel continuity and internal unity, as well as its reputed "independence" from Beijing, are often attributed to the extended influence over the region exerted by Li Desheng. Li became commander of Shenyang in 1973, when Mao Zedong first reshuffled the top regional leadership, and managed to hold that position for over a decade, until 1985, despite strong opposition from "moderates" in the leadership such as Deng Xiaoping. As indicated above, the pattern of promotion among many top Shenyang cadres suggests that Li served as their key patron and likely protector through much of the seventies and eighties. However, if Li's dominant presence in the region is the decisive factor explaining Shenyang's uniqueness, then his eventual ouster from Shenyang and his later (apparently forced) retirement as political commissar of the NDU in 1990<sup>40</sup> would suggest that he has lost a significant amount of power. This, in turn, would lead one to expect major changes in the Shenyang leadership, but this has not yet occurred. It is possible that Li may have agreed to retire in return for a pledge from Deng that the Shenyang leadership would not be severely disrupted. Yet it is difficult to believe that Deng would have made such an agreement if it meant that Li could then retain strong influence within the region.<sup>41</sup>

It is equally likely that Shenyang's unique status derives primarily from another source. The Shenyang MR is often characterized by outside analysts as a "bastion of conservatism," and a strong defender of party control over the army and society.<sup>42</sup> Its disciplined and forceful behavior during the Tiananmen crisis certainly seems to confirm such a hypothesis.<sup>43</sup> This notion suggests that, given China's present tense and unstable political environment, the central leadership may have opted to preserve a major conservative bulwark of the regime, even at the risk of increasing regionalism, rather than to weaken it by bringing in many outsiders. From this perspective, the above-mentioned mixing of Shenyang officers from different units may be seen as an attempt to reduce the likelihood of such regionalism emerging, while retaining Shenyang's basic unity. Also, from such a vantage point, the recent, notable transfer of leading Shenyang cadres (and Tiananmen veterans) to the Guangzhou MR may be seen as an attempt by Beijing to maintain conservative political control over the liberal south, rather

<sup>39</sup>Whitson, 1973, pp. 324, 328.

<sup>40</sup>Li Desheng's replacement as NDU commissar, Zhang Zhen, who is concurrently NDU commandant, is two years older than Li, so it is unlikely that age was a factor in his retirement.

<sup>41</sup>The possibility of Li's continued strong influence over Shenyang would be greatly reduced if in fact he suffered a major stroke during 1989 or 1990, as some analysts believe.

<sup>42</sup>See, for example, Tai Ming Cheung, "Marching on Stomachs," *FEER*, August 18, 1988, p. 30.

<sup>43</sup>The origin of this "conservative bastion" explanation of Shenyang's uniqueness is unclear. It may lie with Shenyang's past role as China's foremost defender against the former "revisionist" Soviet Union. It might also derive, in part, from support that current and former Shenyang leaders extended to anti-Lin Biao forces during the late sixties and early seventies. For example, Liu Jingsong and Song Keda were leading officers at the regimental and divisional levels at that time, and may have decided not to support those higher-level individuals within the Fourth FA elite associated with the Lin Biao Faction.

than as an expression of close Fourth FA ties between the two regions (see below for more on this point).<sup>44</sup>

### THE JINAN MILITARY REGION

The Jinan and Nanjing MRs are roughly equal in importance politically. Both served for many years as the power base for leaders of the former Third FA system (although Jinan acquired many Fourth FA leaders during the sixties), and both protect China's eastern flank. However, we shall begin with a discussion of the Jinan leadership. The Jinan MR, containing the Shandong and Henan MDs, is closest to Beijing and has historically played a pivotal support role in national defense plans, ready to dispatch forces either north or south. Moreover, it contains four group armies: the 67th and 26th GAs based in eastern Shandong (part of the Fifth and Third FA systems, respectively) and the 20th and 54th GAs in northern Henan (part of the Third and Fourth FA systems), while the Nanjing MR commands only three group armies. The region also contains one of two naval bases for the North Fleet.

Several units from the Jinan MR participated in the Tiananmen crackdown. These included at least one regiment of the 20th GA, two infantry divisions of the 54th GA, and one division of the 67th GA. The 172nd Regiment of the 20th GA marched on Tiananmen Square from the south during the night of June 3–4, reportedly encountering very strong resistance resulting in a high number of wounded. Elements of the 54th also moved on Tiananmen Square from the south, but were reportedly delayed en route and did not arrive in the square until early on June 4. No information is available on the mission of units attached to the 67th GA.<sup>45</sup> Overall, forces from Jinan played a somewhat subordinate role to those from the Beijing and Shenyang MRs, but a greater role than other military regions. Moreover, only one member of the current leadership at the military region level can be positively identified as a veteran of Tiananmen (Deputy Political Commissar Qu Jining), but he is not a Jinan cadre. He was political commissar of the 63rd GA of the Beijing MR during the events of May–June 1989 and was promoted to Jinan as part of the 1990 reshuffles. However, some Tiananmen veterans still hold top positions at the group army and provincial district levels.<sup>46</sup>

The top leadership of the Jinan MR was significantly altered during the 1990 reshuffles, although not to the extent of the Beijing MR. Only five of twelve regional leaders retained their posts: Political Commissar Song Qingwei, Deputy Commanders Zhang Zhiyuan and Lin Jigui (also concurrently MR Air Force commander), Deputy Chief of Staff Yang Xizhen, and Political Department Director Jiang Futang. More important, the reshuffles involved a greater shifting of top cadres into and out of the region than occurred in either the Beijing or Shenyang MRs. As with Shenyang, both leading officers in charge of Jinan's troops during

<sup>44</sup>It is also possible that the transfer of high-ranking Shenyang cadres to other areas such as Guangzhou might be seen as a way of strengthening Beijing's resistance to the emergence of military regionalism in both areas. Deng and others may reason that such transfers may weaken the Shenyang leadership while creating divisions within the Guangzhou MR.

<sup>45</sup>Ellis Melvin, personal correspondence.

<sup>46</sup>These include Liang Guanglie (former commander of the 20th GA, transferred to command the 54th GA, Zhu Chao (former commander of the 54th GA, transferred to command the Henan MD), and Zhang Wentai (political commissar of the 54th GA.). Zhu Chao's transfer to the MD level was probably another example of the center's attempt to strengthen riot control capabilities among militia and reserve forces.

the Tiananmen crisis were promoted outside the region (Deputy Commander Gu Hui became commander of the Nanjing MR and Deputy Political Commissar Cao Pengsheng became political commissar of the Lanzhou MR). Other regional leaders who left Jinan include the former regional commander, Li Jiulong (promoted to deputy director of the GLD and then to commander of the Chengdu MR) and a former deputy commander, Ma Weizhi (promoted to deputy head of the NDU). Those brought into the region include Commander Zhang Wannian, Deputy Commander (and concurrently commander of the North Sea Fleet) Qu Zhenmou, Deputy Political Commissar Qu Jining, and Chief of Staff Yang Guoping.

Overall, the Jinan MR leadership currently exhibits a high level of diversity, in both background and likely personal affiliations. Moreover, its top leaders seem weak politically. Both Commander Zhang Wannian and Political Commissar Song Qingwei are essentially outsiders (Song only marginally less so than Zhang), and one lacks a strong power base in other regions (see below). Among second-ranking leaders, only Deputy Commanders Zhang Zhijian and Yan Zhuo, Deputy Political Commissar Cai Renshan, and Political Department Director Jiang Futang can be regarded with some confidence as veteran Jinan cadres. Deputy Commander Qu Zhenmou and Deputy Chief of Staff Yang Xizhen may be veteran regional cadres, but this cannot be confirmed, given data limitations. Deputy Commander Lin Jigui previously served for many years as deputy head of the Lanzhou MR Air Force. Moreover, it is highly likely that both Qu Zhenmou and Lin Jigui are more closely linked to their service arms than to the region. The new deputy chief of staff, He Shanfu, is a likely veteran of the 54th Corps and thus entered Jinan only in 1985. He was appointed to his current post in early 1991.

The top two posts in Jinan are held by leaders with links to different factional groupings: the Fifth FA Faction (with secondary ties to the Second FA elders) and the Third FA Faction. Commander Zhang Wannian is a member of the "southern" Fourth FA contingent and an initial veteran of its 41st Corps, located in the Guangzhou MR. However, unlike the vast majority of regional commanders, Zhang was apparently transferred to another unit in mid-career, although he remained within the same FA system (and the same military region). He joined the nearby 43rd Corps in the late sixties, around the time the unit was sent north to the Wuhan MR. He served as division commander within the 43rd Corps from 1968 to 1978 and ultimately became corps commander in 1981. The unit was subsequently disbanded (probably in 1985, when the Wuhan MR was abolished) and its members likely scattered or demobilized. As a result, Zhang probably has retained few strong lateral and downward professional ties in Central China. He may maintain some links with his original unit, which became the core of today's 41st GA, still within the Guangzhou MR. However, no other veterans of the 41st Corps can be located among China's current MR leadership, with the possible exceptions of Chengdu MR Political Commissar Gu Shanqing and Guangzhou MR Deputy Commander Li Xilin.<sup>47</sup> His most likely high-level associate within the military regions is Gu Hui, a veteran of the 42nd Corps and currently Nanjing MR commander.<sup>48</sup> Yet

<sup>47</sup>See Appendix C.

<sup>48</sup>Zhang and Gu Hui had very similar careers, and advanced through the same ranks at approximately the same time. Both men also graduated from the same department of the PLA Military Academy in 1961. Moreover, although Gu was transferred out of the Guangzhou MR to Jinan just when Zhang was entering it from Wuhan in 1985, both men had apparently served there under You Taizhong. In similar fashion, Gu was promoted from Jinan to command the Nanjing MR in 1990, just when Zhang was transferred into Jinan.



Gu never actually served in the same unit with Zhang. Other Zhang associates in the MRs could be Li Jiulong (Chengdu MR commander), and Ma Bingchen (Chengdu MR deputy commander). A possible associate in Beijing is Liu Anyuan, political commissar of the Second Artillery. All of these officers are "southern" Fourth FA cadres with extensive service in the central and southern military regions.

However, Zhang's upward associations are almost certainly more important in gauging his position within the elite. Yang Dezhi is likely his most significant patron, since Zhang was promoted from division to corps-level rank while Yang was commander of the Wuhan MR (from 1973 to 1979). Yang's patronage may also explain Zhang's transfer to command the Jinan MR after Tiananmen. The PLA elder had led the region for nearly twenty years (from 1955 to 1973) and would no doubt desire to place a trusted follower at its head, assuming that Yang retained some decisive influence over such a transfer. Such a connection would also increase the likelihood that Zhang is related to Chengdu MR commander Li Jiulong, almost certainly a supporter of Yang Dezhi and also a former Jinan MR commander.<sup>49</sup> A second elder patron may be You Taizhong. You was commander of the Guangzhou MR when Zhang was transferred there as deputy commander from Wuhan in 1985. Zhang then succeeded You as commander when the latter moved to Beijing. It is possible that You's ties with Deng were instrumental in obtaining both Zhang's transfer and his promotion.

Such affiliations confirm the general belief that Zhang is a moderate, professional commander; a follower of Deng Xiaoping, yet without close ties to the Yangs.<sup>50</sup> However, despite his upward ties, Zhang's overall position within the PLA is probably severely weakened by his lack of strong downward links, due to his diverse field service within the Fourth FA system. This factor, plus his advanced age, probably explain Zhang's declining status within the leadership. He was not promoted from alternate to full central committee member at the 13th Party Congress in 1987, and was laterally transferred (not promoted) to Jinan from Guangzhou in 1990. Zhang may simply be marking time before retirement.

Political Commissar Song Qingwei is a former Third FA cadre and a probable veteran of the former Fuzhou MR's 31st Corps. He has been in the Jinan MR since 1985, when he was appointed a deputy political commissar, and became regional political commissar in 1987, as well as secretary of the MR party committee. Song's career path and the timing of his promotions almost exactly parallel, as a political officer, those of Beijing MR commander, Wang Chengbin, a fellow native of Shandong and likely veteran of the 31st Corps. The two regional leaders may thus be closely associated. Other, more senior associates include Fu Kuiqing, who probably served as Song's patron during his early career in organization work, and perhaps continued in that role after 1949.<sup>51</sup> Perhaps of greater importance, however, are

<sup>49</sup>See the discussion of Li Jiulong's background, below.

<sup>50</sup>It is doubtful that possible unit-based links to Yang associates such as Liu Anyuan have served to move Zhang into the Yang camp. In fact, some sources speculate that Zhang Wannian was allied with former Nanjing MR commander Xiang Shouzhi in opposing an alleged attempt by Yang Shangkun to increase his position within the CMC at the expense of Zhao Ziyang, before the Tiananmen crisis. Even if Xiang took such an action (see below for more on this), it is unlikely that Zhang would have served as his ally. Their careers do not suggest a basis for any type of interaction, much less opportunities for the formation of an alliance against the Yangs.

<sup>51</sup>Fu Kuiqing was a regimental- and divisional-level commissar and organization cadre in the Third FA system during the late forties and early fifties when Song held similar posts at the company and junior regimental level. Fu was also political commissar of the Fuzhou MR in the early eighties when Song was promoted from deputy political commissar to commissar of the 31st Corps.

Song's apparent ties with a more powerful former member of the Third FA system: Chi Haotian. As with Fu Kuiqing, these links probably derive both from an early association within the Third FA system and subsequent regional connections. Both Chi and Song were company political officers within the Third FA during the late forties. More important, however, Chi was political commissar of the Jinan MR when Song was transferred there to serve as his deputy in 1985. Song then succeeded Chi in 1987.

Even with his strong links to the Third FA Faction and his leadership of the Jinan MR party committee, Song is regarded by some knowledgeable analysts of the PLA as a declining political figure. As in the case of Zhang Wannian, this is probably because of his advanced age, and to some extent because he no longer enjoys a strong regional power base. Some of his former subordinates from the Fuzhou MR probably remain in Nanjing or even perhaps in Jinan, but their strength and unity has no doubt been diluted as a result of the 1985 restructuring. Song's next career move will provide a key indication of his status in the leadership.

Despite their "outsider" status, both Zhang Wannian and Song Qingwei might enjoy significant influence within the Jinan MR if the careers of the region's second-ranking leadership suggested strong links with either Yang Dezhi or Chi Haotian, as a result of the former's long tenure as Jinan commander and the region's early history as a bastion for the Third FA. However, such ties are only partially in evidence today. Although regional veterans such as Zhang Zhijian, Yan Zhuo, and Cai Renshan may enjoy some ties with Yang Dezhi, few top regional leaders exhibit clear Third FA roots.<sup>52</sup> As the only apparent veteran political cadre of the Jinan MR, Cai could be linked with former Jinan cadre and Third FA veteran Zhou Keyu. But such a link would associate him with Yang Baibing, not the Zhang Aiping/Chi Haotian Faction.<sup>53</sup> Chief of Staff Yang Guoping is a veteran Shenyang cadre, and Deputy Political Commissar Qu Jining is a veteran of the Beijing MR. Moreover, among the second-ranking leadership, only Zhang Zhijian can be identified as a veteran of the Jinan group army structure, having served for many years as a staff officer at that level. Information on the current group army leadership is relatively scarce. At least three officers are likely regional veterans, but there are no clear unit-based links between individuals at this level and those at the military region level.

The diversity and relative weakness of the Jinan MR leadership suggest that, unless more powerful figures with stronger roots in the region are placed in command, it will probably not play a major, active role in any future pattern of PLA political involvement. Indeed, Beijing has probably fostered such passivity. The fact that the central leadership did not feel compelled to ensure its control over the region by retaining proven loyalists like Gu Hui and Li Jiulong indicates that Jinan is securely under Beijing's influence. At most, it might serve to lend support to a dominant Yang Dezhi/Zhang Aiping coalition in a post-Deng setting.

<sup>52</sup>Qu Zhenmou has obvious links with the Third FA system, but is almost certainly more closely identified with Zhang Lianzhong's Navy Faction.

<sup>53</sup>In fact, Jinan's current second-ranking leadership exhibits no clear ties with Zhou Keyu.

## THE NANJING MILITARY REGION

The Nanjing MR covers most of China's eastern coast and important inland areas, including the Jiangsu, Anhui, Zhejiang, Jiangxi, and Fujian Military Districts. It is charged with the defense of some of China's most highly populated and prosperous regions, including the industrial municipality of Shanghai.<sup>54</sup> Its major land forces are only slightly fewer in number than those in Jinan, but are distributed among three, rather than four, group armies: the 12th Group Army in Northern Jiangsu (from the Second FA system), the First Group Army near Shanghai (from the First FA system), and the 31st Group Army in Fujian (originally with the Third FA), facing the Taiwan Straits. The region also contains the three major naval bases of China's Eastern Fleet.

Nanjing was very quick to support the announcement of martial law in Beijing in May 1989, almost certainly because Deng's close ally Xiang Shouzhì was commanding the region at the time (see below). However, Nanjing supplied fewer units and played a much less active role in the Tiananmen events than Beijing, Shenyang, or Jinan, for very practical, strategic reasons. The First GA remained in place near Shanghai, to handle any potential social unrest associated with the sizable demonstrations that erupted in the city during April–June 1989, while the 31st Group Army obviously was required to stand ready to repel any attempt by Taipei, however unlikely, to take advantage of China's domestic crisis. Only the 12th GA, based in Northern Jiangsu and by far the closest to Beijing, was available to provide troops for martial law duty. It apparently sent elements from two infantry divisions, an artillery brigade, and an engineer regiment. Although these units performed well, they were not centrally involved in violent confrontations with demonstrators in Beijing. Today, Tiananmen veterans occupy several key posts in the Nanjing leadership, including commander, political commissar, and at least one (and probably two) deputy commander positions.<sup>55</sup>

The Nanjing MR has long been viewed as a very strong support base for Deng Xiaoping, largely because of the dominant presence within the region of his close colleague Xiang Shouzhì (b.1917), as deputy commander (from 1977 to 1982) and commander (from 1982 to 1990). Xiang was originally sent to the region by Deng to reduce and eventually eliminate the strong influence of radical local military leaders who had become deeply entrenched in Nanjing during the Cultural Revolution.<sup>56</sup> In the course of implementing Deng's policy, Xiang Shouzhì undoubtedly also developed his own factional network within Nanjing, thus adding to his lateral ties to other Second FA elders and their associates. His colleague at the top of the regional command, former political commissar and Third FA elder Fu Kuiqing, was clearly subordinate in political status (and military rank) to Xiang Shouzhì,<sup>57</sup> and also served for a shorter period of time in the MR. Thus he no doubt played a secondary, supportive role to Xiang.<sup>58</sup>

<sup>54</sup>The Shanghai Garrison is not discussed in this Report because of the absence of reliable data on its leadership.

<sup>55</sup>The current political commissar of the Jiangxi MD, Zhang Yujang, is also a Tiananmen veteran. Zhang was political department director of the 12th GA during May–June 1989.

<sup>56</sup>One of the most important of these individuals was Li Desheng, former 12th Corps commander and regional deputy commander. Although Li departed the region in 1970 to become director of the GPD, he undoubtedly left behind personal supporters whom Xiang eventually dislodged.

<sup>57</sup>Xiang was the only MR leader named as a full PLA general in 1988, when ranks were restored in the military.

<sup>58</sup>Fu's predecessor as regional political commissar was Guo Linxiang, a very senior PLA officer and another close associate of Deng. Guo was also in the region for a much shorter period of time than Xiang. Even more important,

Nanjing underwent extensive personnel changes during the 1990 reshuffles. Commander Xiang Shouzhi and Political Commissar Fu Kuiqing were both replaced. Among second-ranking leaders, only four officers retained their posts: Deputy Commander Guo Tao, Deputy Commander (and concurrent Regional Navy Commander) Nie Kuiju, Deputy Commander (and concurrent Air Force Commander) Jiang Yutian, and Deputy Chief of Staff Zheng Bingqing. Deputy Commander Guo Xizang, Deputy Political Commissars Wang Yongming and Pei Jiuzhou, Chief of Staff Zhang Zongde, Deputy Chief of Staff Pei Huailiang, and Political Department Director Lan Baojing were all newly appointed. However, most of these changes involved internal promotions. In fact, all the leading officers of the regional command except the commander and three lower-ranking officers (Pei Jiuzhou, Lan Baojing, and Pei Huailiang) are almost certainly Nanjing veterans. This includes the most recently appointed deputy commander, Zhang Taiheng, a veteran of the former Fuzhou MR, which was absorbed by the Nanjing MR in 1985.<sup>59</sup> This remarkable level of internal continuity and cohesiveness in leadership structure is exceeded only by the Shenyang MR.

Equally important, most Nanjing officers were promoted into the higher ranks of the regional leadership during Xiang Shouzhi's reign, and probably retain strong links with Xiang and, through him, with Deng Xiaoping and other Second FA elders. Such links are especially likely in the case of Political Commissar Shi Yuxiao (the senior party figure in the Nanjing MR), along with second-ranking leaders such as Guo Tao, Guo Xizhang, Wang Yongming, and 31st Group Army Commander and former Regional Chief of Staff Liu Lunxian. They are less clear in the case of Zhang Zongde. Moreover, although a former Third FA cadre and likely veteran of the 28th Corps, Zhang Taiheng probably has close ties to another Second FA elder, Qin Jiwei. Qin served as the dominant figure within the Beijing MR from 1977 to 1987, when Zhang entered the higher levels of the corps and group army command in that region.

Shi Yuxiao might possess secondary ties to other senior PLA leaders, including Fu Kuiqing and Guo Linxiang, but these are probably not strong.<sup>60</sup> Outside the region, Shi is probably most closely linked with Lanzhou MR commander Fu Quanyou, on the basis of their probable common extended service together as leaders of the First Corps, the only First FA Corps to survive after the Korean War as a front-line combat unit.<sup>61</sup> This association, in turn, may link Shi to Zhang Taiheng, a former close associate of Fu Quanyou in the Chengdu MR. (Zhang reportedly served as Fu's chief assistant within the region from 1985 to 1990, and then succeeded Fu as regional commander.) Moreover, this relationship provides a further,

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he is simply not regarded as a major political player in the leadership and was probably also intended by Deng to serve as Xiang's supporter.

<sup>59</sup>Zhang was formerly commander of the Chengdu MR, but was relieved of command in late 1991, apparently as a result of his responsibility for a helicopter crash in Chengdu that resulted in the deaths of many regional officers. Also see Appendix C.

<sup>60</sup>Fu Kuiqing did not become Shi's superior until 1985, when he transferred from the former Fuzhou MR to become political commissar of the Nanjing MR. Guo Linxiang was probably more of a reliable placeholder than an active figure in the region, as suggested above.

<sup>61</sup>Shi is almost certainly a long-term veteran of the former First Corps, stationed in the Wuhan and Beijing MRs during the late fifties and sixties and subsequently transferred to the Nanjing MR in 1974. The unit became the core of the First GA in 1985. See Appendix C. Shi's relative youth makes it unlikely that he is associated with First FA elder Wang Zhen, however.

albeit indirect, tie between both Shi and Zhang and Xiang Shouzhi, since Fu is reportedly a close ally of Xiang Shouzhi (see the discussion of the Lanzhou MR leadership below).

Among current second-ranking Nanjing leaders, secondary associations exist with the Third FA Faction, as seen in the field unit careers of Deputy Commanders Zhang Taiheng<sup>62</sup> and Jiang Yutian (the latter also a likely associate of Wang Hai). Beijing's Wang Chengbin is probably very close to Zhang Taiheng, since both are fellow officers of former Fuzhou MR Corps of the Third FA and both are natives of Shandong. If true, identification with Wang could provide a second reason for an indirect link between Zhang and Xiang Shouzhi, given Wang's likely close relationship with the powerful PLA elder. Less significant MR links with former Third FA officers such as Jinan's Song Qingwei and Wang Chengbin may also exist through Zhang Zongde, again as a result of common service in the former Fuzhou MR.

Finally, on the group army level, all known commanders and commissars appear to be Nanjing veterans. As with Shenyang, however, each command apparently combines an insider with an officer from another group army.

The presence of Commander Gu Hui significantly complicates our overall picture of leadership unity and cohesiveness within the Nanjing MR, as centered upon Xiang Shouzhi. Gu is a former member of the "southern" Fourth FA system and a career veteran of the 42nd Corps within the Guangzhou MR. He thus has no organizational ties with Nanjing, and no direct association with Xiang Shouzhi. But he is clearly a powerful military figure with a strong factional base in a neighboring military region. On the basis of his past service record, Gu can be linked with former Guangzhou Commanders You Taizhong (from 1982 to 1987) and Zhang Wannian (from 1987 to 1990). You in particular may have served as Gu's patron as he moved into the higher levels of the Guangzhou MR and then over to the Jinan MR in 1985. Gu may be associated with Zhang Wannian on the basis of their similar career paths as members of the "southern" Fourth FA contingent, although the relationship is probably not terribly strong, as noted above. In addition, Gu may be associated with Chengdu MR Commander Li Jiulong, also of the "southern" Fourth FA contingent and Gu's direct superior for five years in the Jinan MR headquarters.

A close association with You Taizhong would identify Gu Hui as a supporter of the Second FA Faction and thus probably place him, indirectly, in the same camp as Xiang Shouzhi. However, some very knowledgeable observers of the PLA insist that Gu's primary associate in Beijing is Yang Shangkun. The two men allegedly established a close personal relationship when the elder Yang was serving as a leading party and state official in Guangdong in the early eighties. Indeed, Yang, and not You Taizhong, may have been instrumental in obtaining Gu's promotion to corps commander in 1983. If Gu Hui is indeed a Yang follower, he might be receiving support within Nanjing from Political Department Director Lan Baojing, the former political commissar of the Tianjin Garrison Command and a likely follower of Yang Baibing, or perhaps from Deputy Political Commissar Pei Jiuzhou, a former Shenyang cadre. Both men were brought into the Nanjing MR in 1990, as noted above. However, Gu

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<sup>62</sup>Zhang's former Third FA associates probably include high-level members of that field army from the Beijing MR such as Wan Haifeng and, to a lesser extent, senior surviving Third FA elders from the forties and fifties, such as Ye Fei, commander of the Third FA's 10th Army in 1949 (which contained Zhang's unit, the 28th Corps), and commander and political commissar of the Fuzhou MR in the fifties and sixties. However, both Wan and Ye are widely seen as less significant leaders.

may enjoy a much closer relationship with Yang Baibing supporter Yu Yongbo, who served alongside Gu Hui as political commissar of the 42nd Corps in 1983–85.

It is impossible to resolve these conflicting interpretations of Gu Hui's likely personal links, given current data limitations. At least one piece of evidence suggests, however, that Gu may indeed be a Yang supporter. Xiang Shouzhi resisted being retired from Nanjing for several weeks in 1990, allegedly because he was opposed to Gu Hui's appointment as his replacement. Such resistance may have been based simply on Gu Hui's "outsider" status. However, it becomes more plausible if Gu is in fact a Yang supporter, since many observers of the PLA insist that Xiang Shouzhi vehemently opposes Yang Shangkun. It is possible that the promotion of Xiang's presumed follower, Wang Chengbin, to command the Beijing MR and the retention of most of his supporters in Nanjing was the price Xiang eventually exacted for agreeing to be replaced by a Yang supporter. In this way he could weaken, to some extent, the position of the Yangs in the capital while retaining considerable influence within Nanjing.

It is quite possible that Deng Xiaoping agreed with Xiang's apparent logic in promoting Wang Chengbin to Beijing, given Deng's penchant for balancing subordinates against one another (the commissar in Beijing, Zhang Gong, is a Yang supporter, as we have seen). Moreover, Deng may have also felt that he was not jeopardizing his control of Nanjing by agreeing to the promotion of Gu Hui. Both Gu (as a former Jinan MR deputy commissar) and Shi Yuxiao (as a former Nanjing MR deputy political commissar) performed exemplary service during Tiananmen as deputy commander and deputy commissar, respectively, of the Martial Law Headquarters. In addition, both Gu and Shi are professional field officers who rose rapidly to the top of the group army structure during the reforms, making the decisive jump from regimental to group army leadership within a few years. As a result of these factors, Deng probably believes that both men are stalwart supporters of his reform program and of him personally. Finally, Deng may have agreed to the retention within the Nanjing MR of many presumed Xiang followers (and a few associates of Liu Huaqing and Zhang Aiping) out of a belief that most will remain loyal to him or his designated successor because of their presumed association with his trusted ally Xiang Shouzhi.<sup>63</sup>

Nevertheless, Gu Hui's present position raises the prospect of serious conflict emerging within the Nanjing MR in a post-Deng setting, if he was placed in the region against the wishes of Xiang Shouzhi, and to defend the interests of the Yangs. Yet if Gu is actually more closely linked to associates in the Guangzhou MR, which is reportedly very anti-Yang (see the next section), and to You Taizhong, then the Nanjing MR could be unambiguously regarded as the primary regional power base for the Second FA Faction. Further clarification of Gu Hui's personal associations is essential to any accurate assessment of Nanjing's ultimate political significance.

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<sup>63</sup>We should also add that the Yangs may have determined that Wang Chengbin's promotion to Beijing was a price worth paying, since they may believe their position in Beijing is sufficiently strong enough to keep him in check.

## THE GUANGZHOU MILITARY REGION

The Guangzhou MR covers the Guangdong, Guangxi, Hunan, Hubei, and Hainan MDs. These provinces contain some of the richest areas of China, including the economically advanced, highly marketized coastal regions and special economic zones of Guangdong province. The region is charged with both the defense of a significant portion of China's heartland (consisting of part of the former Wuhan MR) and the entire southern coast, from Fujian to Vietnam (it shares the Sino-Vietnam border with the Chengdu MR), as well as hundreds of small islands and atolls extending for over one thousand miles into the South China Sea. To accomplish this task, the Guangzhou MR commands two group armies, the 42nd GA based in eastern Guangdong near the coast, and the 41st GA based in northeastern Guangxi, together containing the fewest ground units of any region. Both units were originally part of the Fourth FA. The region also includes the three major naval bases of China's South Sea Fleet, and the 15th Airborne Army in eastern Hubei, under the command of the PLA AF Headquarters in Beijing.

Despite its relatively small force structure, the Guangzhou MR is generally considered more politically significant for Beijing than either of the stronger and much larger regions to the west and northwest (i.e., Chengdu and Lanzhou). This is primarily because of its much greater population and wealth, its proximity to Taiwan and Hong Kong, and, since its absorption of part of the Wuhan MR in 1985, the vital military transportation facilities and airborne forces it contains. The region's exposure to liberal ideas and economic enticements through Hong Kong and Taiwan poses particularly significant worries for the central leadership today.

No evidence is available to indicate that units under the command of the Guangzhou MR took part in the Tiananmen crisis. If such participation has occurred, it was almost certainly very minimal. In contrast, although not under the direction of the regional command, the 15th Airborne Army did play a central role in Tiananmen. It dispatched at least one airborne brigade and a training brigade. These units were probably the first to be sent to Beijing after the announcement of martial law on May 20, 1989. They arrived soon afterward by air, and subsequently joined units of the 40th GA and the 54th GA in moving on Tiananmen Square from the south during the night of June 3-4.<sup>64</sup>

The top leadership of the Guangzhou MR underwent a relatively mild reshuffle in 1990. Political Commissar Zhang Zhongxian, Deputy Commanders Li Xinliang, Gao Zhenjia, and Liu Heqiao, and Deputy Chief of Staff Bi Zifeng remained in place, while Commander Zhu Dunfa, Deputy Commander Li Xilin, Deputy Political Commissars Gao Tianzheng and Liu Xinzeng, Chief of Staff Chen Xianhua, Deputy Chiefs of Staff Li Qianyuan and Song Wenhan, and Political Department Director Fang Zuqi were newly appointed. Former Commander Zhang Wannian was laterally transferred to Jinan (as noted above), while former Deputy Political Commissar Gu Shanqing was promoted to political commissar of the Chengdu MR. Several key positions are now filled by outsiders. Particularly important was the appointment of Shenyang veterans Zhu Dunfa and Fang Zuqi, adding to an existing Shenyang presence in the region that includes Zhang Zhongxian and perhaps Gao Zhenjia. Unfortunately, insuffi-

<sup>64</sup>See below for more on the 15th Airborne Army.

cient information is available on leading officers at the group army level to evaluate their relation to the region, and to one another.

The resulting leadership profile is quite diverse, with former Shenyang cadres holding both leading positions in the region, along with the leadership of the political department. The remainder of the regional leadership is divided among a plurality of Guangzhou cadres (at least three apparent Guangzhou veterans were promoted or retained their posts: Li Xinliang, Li Xilin, and Chen Xianhua), a Second FA veteran from the Nanjing MR's 12th Corps (Liu Xinzeng), a Beijing MR cadre (Gao Tianzheng), and a few largely unidentified lower-level officers.<sup>65</sup> This diversity almost certainly reflects Beijing's desire to avoid localism in Guangzhou, which is also suggested by the geographic origins of the regional leadership. The majority consists of cadres from northern or eastern provinces (e.g., Zhu Dunfa is a native of Jiangsu, Zhang Zhongxian and Li Xinliang are from Shandong, Li Xilin and Liu Heqiao are Hebei natives, Liu Xinzeng is from Henan, Gao Zhenjia is from Liaoning, and Gao Tianzheng is a native of Beijing). None of its top leaders are from any of the region's southern provinces.

The prominence of Shenyang cadres among the Guangzhou MR leadership is usually attributed by analysts of the PLA to the common Fourth FA lineage of both regions, as noted above. If true, one would expect to see clear signs of strong Fourth FA representation within the region during the seventies and eighties. However, this is not the case.<sup>66</sup> Also, only one former Shenyang cadre in the Guangzhou leadership, Zhang Zhongxian, has a connection with the Fourth FA system.

A closer look at the commander and commissar of the Guangzhou MR suggests that our above-mentioned hypothesis regarding Shenyang's unique status as a bastion of conservatism may better explain the presence of cadres from the northeast. The career of Zhu Dunfa suggests strong links with the Shenyang MR and with Li Desheng in particular, but few if any with the Fourth FA system. Li was commander of Shenyang when Zhu was promoted to the top of the Second FA's 16th Corps leadership and was most likely instrumental in obtaining Zhu's advancement to the regional command as well. Zhu may also be associated with Li's predecessor Chen Xilian, a long-time Second FA member who commanded the Shenyang MR from 1959 to 1973. But such personal affiliations probably do not explain his promotion to Guangzhou during the 1990 reshuffles.<sup>67</sup> This almost certainly came as a result of the exceptional service he rendered to the regime during the Tiananmen

<sup>65</sup>We do know, however, that Deputy Chief of Staff Li Qianyuan was brought in from Nanjing MR, where he served as commander of the First GA in 1985-90, succeeding Fu Quanyou.

<sup>66</sup>For example, You Taizhong was Guangzhou MR commander during half of the eighties, while Xu Shiyou, a Third FA cadre, was commander during most of the seventies. A Second FA veteran, Wang Meng, served as MR commissar for much of the eighties. As pointed out in our discussion of the Shenyang MR, the notion that Fourth FA ties are behind the pattern of personnel shifts between Shenyang and Guangzhou implies that personal affiliation based on identity with the remnants of a highly diverse and far-flung field army system is strong enough to influence decisions made by a central leadership that contains very few members or sympathizers of that system. This is highly unlikely.

<sup>67</sup>Chen has been in disgrace since his removal by Deng in 1980 and is not regarded as a significant PLA leader today. On the other hand, it is difficult to believe that Li Desheng's position in Beijing was strong enough in 1990 to dictate the transfer of Zhu and other Shenyang followers to Guangzhou, particularly given his poor relationship with Deng Xiaoping (and perhaps his poor health as well). Alternatively, if the intent of Zhu's move to Guangzhou was to weaken Li Desheng's overall support in Shenyang, then one would expect Beijing to replace Zhu (or other Shenyang leaders) with outsiders. Yet this has not occurred, as mentioned above.



crisis, and his overall reputation as a highly professional combat officer. Zhu and former Deputy Political Commissar Li Wenqing (now serving in the NDU) were in charge of the Shenyang units that performed extremely well in suppressing demonstrations and assisting in the clearing of Tiananmen Square.<sup>68</sup> Thus, Zhu Dunfa was probably transferred to Guangzhou by Deng to counter the threat to party rule posed by the excessive levels of vice, corruption, and (most important) political liberalism produced by South China's relative wealth and its proximity to the luxury and "decadence" of Hong Kong and the coastal economic zones. He is therefore most likely viewed by Deng and his associates in Beijing as a disciplined combat officer of proven competence and unquestioned loyalty.

This evaluation may also apply to Political Commissar Zhang Zhongxian, a Fourth FA cadre and veteran of the former 46th Corps, now disbanded. Zhang was clearly a contemporary of Zhu Dunfa within the Shenyang MR. Equally important, his career suggests strong support from above, especially during the eighties (he was jumped two levels at that time, from deputy political department director to regional political commissar).<sup>69</sup> Overall, Zhang's past postings within the Fourth FA system, his combat experience during the Civil War and Korean War, and the timing of his entrance into the highest levels of the Shenyang regional leadership all strongly suggest that his primary patron was fellow Shandong native Liu Zhenhua, the former political commissar of Shenyang. Yet Liu's political stature at the center has almost certainly dropped considerably due to his retirement after the events of April–June 1989. As a result, Zhang may now be viewed by Deng and the Yangs as a loyal, highly competent, and conservative Shenyang political cadre with a much reduced political standing. This could explain why he remained in place in the Guangzhou MR during the 1990 reshuffles. This hypothesis will gain greater credence if Zhang is not reelected to the central committee at the next party congress.<sup>70</sup>

Among the second-ranking leadership, it is difficult to establish clear factional links between the Guangzhou veterans and specific PLA leaders outside the region. The strongest lateral ties are probably with Gu Hui, especially through Chief of Staff Chen Xianhua (a fellow veteran of the 42nd Corps) and Deputy Commander Li Xilin (a fellow member of the "southern" Fourth FA system and perhaps also a former veteran of the 42nd Corps). Zhang Wannian could be another (albeit less likely) associate, given his ties to South China. The most likely candidate for influence among the Guangzhou veterans, however, is almost certainly You Taizhong, given his presence in the region as commander during the height of the reform period, and his close ties to Deng. You is also probably associated with MR outsider Liu Xinzeng, through common service in the 12th Corps. One might also expect the Yangs to enjoy some influence within the region, given Yang Shangkun's leadership presence in Guang-

<sup>68</sup>Zhu Dunfa is apparently the only member of the current Guangzhou leadership with Tiananmen experience. Senior Colonel Tian Ruichang, deputy political commissar of the 15th Airborne Army, also participated in Tiananmen.

<sup>69</sup>Zhang's apparently high political stature is also indicated by his party status. He was named an alternate member of the 12th Central Committee in 1982 and became a full member in 1987, one of only two regional commissars to hold that rank (the other is Shi Yuxiao).

<sup>70</sup>The third member of the Shenyang contingent, Political Department Director Fang Zuqi, was probably promoted to Guangzhou to assist Zhang Zhongxian in strengthening political work in the region.

dong immediately following his rehabilitation.<sup>71</sup> Yet some knowledgeable observers of politics in South China insist that provincial party and military leaders are not supportive of the Yangs.

Overall, the diverse background of the Guangzhou MR leadership and the presence of outsiders from Shenyang in particular suggest that Beijing has made exceptional efforts to avoid the emergence of a cohesive, regionally based military grouping in South China. As with the Jinan MR, Guangzhou's leadership makeup could limit the region to only a passive role in any future elite struggle.

### **THE 15TH AIRBORNE ARMY**

Although located at Xiaogan, Hubei, in the Guangzhou MR, the 15th Airborne Army is under the direct command of the PLA Air Force Headquarters in Beijing. As indicated above, the unit played a significant role in the Tiananmen crackdown, and might be called upon again if large-scale public demonstrations broke out in Beijing or other major cities. Unfortunately, little information is available on the current leadership of the 15th Airborne. Virtually every top officer was shifted during the 1990 reshuffles, and some individuals were transferred into the PAP, such as the deputy commander of the PAP General Headquarters in Beijing Zuo Yinsheng, former deputy head of the 15th Airborne. The current commander of the unit is probably a complete outsider, while the political commissar is a definite insider (see Appendix C).

### **THE CHENGDU MILITARY REGION**

The Chengdu MR contains the Xizang (Tibet), Sichuan, Guizhou, and Yunnan MDs. The latter two provincial districts were part of the former Kunming MR, prior to the 1985 reorganization. Bordering on India, Nepal, Myanmar (Burma), Laos, and Vietnam, the region is responsible for the defense of a major portion of China's most sensitive frontier areas, including some of the most rugged territory in Asia. It is also charged with maintaining peace in the restive Xizang Autonomous Region, historically the site of violent rebellions against the Chinese government led by independence-minded Tibetan monks.

Chengdu contains two group armies, the 13th GA based in Northeastern Sichuan, and the 14th GA located in Eastern Yunnan. Together, they command slightly more military units than those under the Guangzhou MR. Both group armies were part of the Fourth Army of the Second FA, and were formed in Southwest China during the late forties from units that fought under Deng Xiaoping and Liu Bocheng. They have existed as the dominant military forces in the region since that time. There is no evidence to indicate that units from either group army participated in the events of April–June 1989. Moreover, Chengdu is apparently the only military region that does not include any veterans of Tiananmen in its top leadership.

<sup>71</sup>In addition, one current regional leader can perhaps be viewed as a Yang supporter on the basis of past organizational affiliation: Deputy Political Commissar Gao Tianzheng, the former political commissar of Beijing's 38th GA.

The region underwent considerable leadership changes during the 1990 reshuffles. Former Commander Fu Quanyou, a tough, loyal professional combat officer with experience in suppressing unrest in Tibet, was laterally transferred to the Lanzhou MR and replaced by Third FA veteran (and Second FA supporter) Zhang Taiheng. (Zhang was subsequently removed from his position in fall 1991 because of his apparent responsibility for a helicopter accident that claimed the lives of many regional officers. He was replaced as MR commander by Li Jiulong and was eventually demoted to deputy commander of the Nanjing MR.) Former long-time Political Commissar Wan Haifeng was retired for age. Deputy Commanders Liao Xilong, Ma Bingchen, and Hou Shujun, Chief of Staff Tao Bojun, and Deputy Chiefs of Staff Xu Zejun and Yang Anzhong remained in place (although Hou was replaced in early 1992 by Xie Decai), while Deputy Commander Jiang Hongquan, Deputy Political Commissars Wang Yongning and Shao Nong, Deputy Chiefs of Staff Zhang Shuyun and Zhang Changshun, and Political Department Director Zheng Xianbin were newly appointed. Only two regional-level officers (Shao Nong and Zheng Xianbin) can be positively identified as being promoted from within the region, while Political Commissar Gu Shanqing and Wang Yongning were brought in from the nearby Guangzhou MR. Finally, the current two leaders of the 13th GA have held their posts for at least five years, while those of the 14th GA were both newly appointed in 1990. Moreover, the commissar of the 14th GA was promoted from within the region while the commander previously headed the Yunnan Military District.<sup>72</sup> All four GA leaders, however, are likely long-term veterans of their units.

Historically, the Chengdu MR has been viewed by analysts as Deng Xiaoping's main power base within the PLA, largely because of its early and continuous links with units of the Second FA system, even though an increasing number of Fourth FA veterans had entered the region by the sixties. Moreover, more recent, younger regional veterans who achieved high positions during the reform period are believed by many observers to enjoy close links with the Second FA elders through association with Wang Chenghan and, to a lesser extent, with You Taizhong.<sup>73</sup>

This notion of continued Second FA support is only partly confirmed by our examination of the entire current leadership of the Chengdu MR. Overall, relatively few top officers can be considered long-term Chengdu veterans: perhaps only Deputy Commander Liao Xilong, Deputy Political Commissar Shao Nong, and Political Department Director Zheng Xianbin. The three most important regional officers (e.g., Li Jiulong, Gu Shanqing, and Tao Bojun), as well as others such as Wang Yongning, are outsiders, although Li spent a considerable period of time within the region during the late fifties and sixties as a regimental- and division-level officer with the 54th Corps before it was transferred to the Jinan MR. At least one of the five deputy chiefs of staff is an outsider (Zhang Shuyun came from the Nanjing MR). More

<sup>72</sup>In contrast to PLA leaders serving in internal provinces, the heads of provincial military districts in sensitive border areas such as Yunnan (or in those regions containing significant numbers of restive ethnic minorities) are invariably chosen for their high military leadership capabilities and loyalty to Beijing. Hence, this promotion is not unusual.

<sup>73</sup>Wang Chenghan is a retired PLA elder with early Second FA ties, but stronger Civil War-based links with the Fifth FA system under Yang Dezhi. He is nevertheless considered to be a close supporter of Deng Xiaoping, as suggested by his long service in the southwest. He was a deputy commander of the Chengdu MR for 13 years (1969–82), serving under Qin Jiwei in the early seventies and You Taizhong in the early eighties, among others. He succeeded You as regional commander in October 1982, and led the region until June 1985 (for more on Wang, see Chapter 3). You Taizhong's service as commander of the Chengdu MR from 1980–82 was his only posting in the region.

important, although Chengdu contains several apparent supporters of Deng's most trusted Second FA associates, such ties are not based on a common Second FA background. Many regional leaders have extensive careers in field units within various segments of the "southern" Fourth FA and the Third FA systems. In other words, many links to Deng Xiaoping are indirect and partial and rely on ties with a single Second FA elder based on subordinate duty within a region outside Chengdu. Moreover, only one current second-ranking leader in Chengdu (Jiang Hongquan, below) holds a party central committee post, which certainly suggests that the regional leadership does not enjoy great political influence.<sup>74</sup>

Commander Li Jiulong was appointed to his post in October 1991, replacing Zhang Taiheng. Li is a veteran and former commander of the 54th Corps of the "southern" Fourth FA system with long service in the southwest and central China, extensive combat experience as a field commander in Korea, Tibet, and on the Sino-Indian and Sino-Vietnamese borders, and considerable expertise in military logistics. His career strongly suggests that Li moved into the higher ranks of the PLA regional command through the support of Yang Dezhi. Yang led the former Wuhan MR in the mid- and late seventies when Li was serving in the region as commander of the 135th Division of the 54th Corps. He was rumored to have supported Li's promotion to deputy commander and then commander of the 54th following the Sino-Vietnamese border conflict, and to have arranged his subsequent promotion to commander of the Jinan MR in 1985. Yang had led the Jinan MR for nearly twenty years, from 1955 to 1973. A secondary upward association may exist with Chi Haotian, who served alongside Li as co-leader of the Jinan MR in the late eighties. Among fellow members of the "southern" Fourth FA contingent, Li probably established the closest association with Zhang Wannian, as a result of their extensive field service as corps commanders within the former Wuhan MR during the seventies and early eighties. In fact, both men were probably promoted to the highest levels of the regional command structure through the support of Yang Dezhi, eventually serving successively as commanders of the Jinan MR. Another former Fourth FA associate could be Gu Hui, Nanjing MR commander and veteran of the 42nd Corps.

Political Commissar Gu Shanqing is also a member of the "southern" Fourth FA elite and a likely veteran of the Guangzhou MR. His career suggests that he is a very competent and undoubtedly loyal political officer, but with little apparent political influence. Gu spent a considerable period of time within a military district in Guangzhou, rather than within field units under a group army command. Yet he nevertheless rose rapidly within Guangzhou during the mid- to late eighties, making an important jump from the military district to the region-level command. This almost certainly occurred as a result of strong support from above, which perhaps emerged because Gu showed unusual promise for a district-level officer in implementing a new style of political work among militia and reserve forces. Zhang Zhongxian could have provided such support, but his roots in the Guangzhou MR are not deep, as noted above, and it is hard to believe that he would have developed close ties with a veteran Guangzhou cadre at the military district level in just a few years.

More likely Gu supporters are You Taizhong and Zhang Wannian, successive Guangzhou commanders during Gu's rise to the regional command level. Of the two men, You was un-

<sup>74</sup>Below the second-rank leadership, the current commander of the 13th GA, Chen Shijun, was elected an alternate member of the party central committee in 1987.

doubtedly the more influential figure within the region, given his close ties to Deng Xiaoping. However, Zhang and Gu may be related through a common unit association within the Fourth FA system (i.e., Gu could be a veteran of Zhang's 41st Corps). Moreover, a link with Zhang Wannian would establish a basis for Gu's association with fellow Fourth FA veteran Li Jiulong, given the latter's likely close tie to Zhang. This seems improbable, however, since Beijing usually seeks to pair MR commanders and commissars from different factional networks. Possible secondary colleagues from Gu's Guangzhou days include Li Xinliang and Li Xilin, both deputy regional commanders. No current high-ranking political officers within Guangzhou (or other regions) appear as likely colleagues for Gu Shanqing. Possible lower-ranking associates within Chengdu, however, are Ma Bingchen and Wang Yongning, although it is unlikely that either individual wields great influence. Overall, Gu Shanqing can thus be considered a pro-reform political officer with likely ties to the Second FA Faction.

Many of the top tier of second-rank officers within Chengdu (i.e., above the deputy chief of staff rank) also exhibit links with members of Deng's Second FA Faction, or with regional leaders possibly associated with that group. However, many individuals probably lack significant political influence: Some have no apparent political base, because they are "uprooted" cadres from defunct regions or units (e.g., Tao Bojun and probably Ma Bingchen); some are most likely at the end of their careers (e.g., Shao Nong and also Ma Bingchen); and others are probable Chengdu or former Kunming MR veterans but most likely too young to enjoy much political influence (e.g., Liao Xilong, Zheng Xianbin, and perhaps the four deputy chiefs of staff). A regional leader such as Chengdu Air Force Commander Xie Decai is probably most closely identified with his service, while Jiang Hongqian (commander of the Xizang Military District) is almost certainly a Beijing loyalist with experience in minority areas. Wang Yongning may have been promoted from Guangzhou to assist Gu Shanqing.

Finally, one might expect the Yangs to enjoy significant support in the Chengdu MR, given the fact that Yang Baibing served in the region for over fifteen years, from 1950 to 1966. However, the inclusion of many outsiders in the top regional leadership today, and the fact that Yang's highest post in the region was deputy political department director, suggest that any influence he may enjoy is relatively weak. One possible associate is Deputy Political Commissar Shao Nong, a Chengdu veteran.<sup>75</sup>

Overall, Chengdu's ties to Deng and the Second FA system may be weaker today than in the past, centered on outsiders and professional officers with little political clout. Although its most important outside links are probably with Second FA elders such as Xiang Shouzhi and You Taizhong, the general diversity of its leadership probably places the region in a category similar to Jinan and Guangzhou, suggesting a relatively passive role in any post-Deng leadership struggle.

## THE LANZHOU MILITARY REGION

The Lanzhou MR is China's largest military region, containing the Shaanxi, Gansu, Ningxia, Qinghai, and Xinjiang Military Districts. It is responsible for the defense of a major segment

<sup>75</sup>It is possible that Yang Baibing still maintains ties with middle-ranking (i.e., divisional and regimental) leaders in the Chengu MR, as a result of his past direction of the MR organization department. Unfortunately, we do not have information on the backgrounds of officers at such levels.

of Chinese territory bordering Mongolia, the former Soviet Union, Pakistan, and India. The region also contains large numbers of ethnic minorities, many of which are extremely opposed to Han Chinese rule and occasionally resort to violent demonstrations bordering on rebellion. Such activities are often brutally suppressed by Lanzhou's military forces. Lanzhou also contains China's sensitive nuclear weapons production facilities and missile testing sites, which adds to the strategic importance of the region. Given such responsibilities and challenges, it is not surprising that the Lanzhou MR commands 12 infantry divisions, the fourth largest number among China's military regions. These are divided between only two group armies: the 47th and the 21st, both based in Shaanxi. The former was previously associated with the Fourth FA and the latter was with the Third FA.

As with the Chengdu MR, we have no evidence to suggest that any units from Lanzhou participated in the events of April–June 1989. Yet at least two current regional leaders were prominent veterans of Tiananmen: Political Commissar Cao Pengsheng and Xinjiang MD Deputy Commander Fu Bingyue. Both were transferred into Lanzhou during the 1990 reshuffles.

The upper levels of the Lanzhou MR leadership underwent the most extensive reshuffling of any military region in 1990. Only one deputy commander (and concurrent air force head, Sun Jinghua) and one deputy chief of staff (Liang Peizhen) remained in place. Unlike the other six military regions, Lanzhou's top two leaders were both replaced by outsiders. Former Commander Zhao Xianshun (b.1924) and former Political Commissar Li Xuanhua (b.1922) had both led the region from 1985 to 1990 and were almost certainly retired for age.<sup>76</sup> The new commander, Fu Quanyou, is a tough, loyal combat officer. The new political commissar, Cao Pengsheng, is a Tiananmen veteran with a security background. Among second-ranking regional leaders, however, only the new chief of staff, Chi Yunxiu, is a complete outsider (he was formerly director of the Logistics Department of the Guangzhou MR). The remaining identifiable members of the regional leadership were promoted from within the Lanzhou MR. Moreover, several appear to have spent many years within the region.

Historically, the Lanzhou MR has been most closely associated with the First FA system, elements of which drove the Nationalists from Northwest China and established a pattern of military-dominated government within the area in the late forties and early fifties. Among former First FA leaders, the elder Wang Zhen has exerted an extremely high level of influence over the region since 1949, because of his extensive, historical ties to the northwest (see Chapter 1) and his direct, military approach to the handling of minority unrest. No other party or military elders have led the region, although Yang Dezhi was centrally involved in the conquest of the northwest province of Shaanxi during the Civil War. Most knowledgeable observers of the PLA believe that Wang continues to exert decisive influence over the affairs of the Lanzhou MR, and that Deng Xiaoping defers to his judgment on most matters pertaining to the region. He is almost certainly consulted over the selection of leading regional officers.

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<sup>76</sup>Zhao is a veteran Fourth FA cadre with extensive service in Shenyang prior to his appointment to Lanzhou in 1982. Li is a Third FA cadre with service in the East China and Beijing regions prior to entering Lanzhou at the district level in 1980.

Aside from Wang Zhen, however, no other elder members of the former First FA system play an important role in the Lanzhou MR today. Many are dead (e.g., former Defense Minister Peng Dehuai), while others lost political influence relative to other field army elites as a result of the Cultural Revolution. Also, most former units of the First FA were either deactivated after the Korean War, reassigned as replacements for Korean War units associated with other field armies, or redesignated as Production and Construction Corps units in the northwest. The few remaining First FA combat units were transferred out of the region, to areas such as Central China or Tibet.<sup>77</sup>

It is no surprise, therefore, that the Lanzhou leadership today exhibits few apparent unit-based ties to Wang Zhen. Commander Fu Quanyou is the only exception. He is the only current commander of a military region to emerge from the First FA system, and is the only member of that field army system within the top Lanzhou leadership, with the possible exception of Gao Huanchang, the commander of the Xinjiang MD.<sup>78</sup> Fu is a highly competent field officer and likely career veteran of the First Corps (the core of the subsequent First Group Army), with extensive combat experience in the Chinese Civil War (mainly in the northwest), the Korean War, the Sino-Vietnamese border clashes of the early eighties, and in actions against Tibetan resistance to Chinese rule, as commander of the Chengdu MR during the late eighties. Fu's advance through various leadership posts within the First Corps (he became its commander in 1983) occurred in the former Wuhan MR and the Nanjing MR. He was promoted two ranks, from First Corps commander to commander of the Chengdu MR in 1985 as a result of the exemplary and innovative leadership qualities he displayed in combat on the Vietnamese border.

His early exploits in the northwest, his clearly demonstrated military expertise, and his experience in commanding troops within a restive border region in large part explain Fu's subsequent lateral transfer to Lanzhou during the 1990 reshuffles. Of additional importance, however, were no doubt his personal affiliations in Beijing. Fu's early distinguished career in the First FA system suggests a possible connection to Wang Zhen. His later service in Nanjing suggests a strong link to Xiang Shouzhi and perhaps to Guo Linxiang. He is also probably a close associate of Shi Yuxiao, as a result of their extensive service together in Nanjing and in combat on the Vietnam front. Fu's capabilities and likely links with high-level party and military leaders also explain his high party position. He has been a member of the central committee since 1982.

The background of Political Commissar Cao Pengsheng provides a sharp contrast to that of Fu Quanyou. He is reportedly a hardline ideologue and specialist in security and propaganda work and a complete outsider to the Lanzhou MR. He began his military career as a propagandist for units within the Fourth FA system in the northeast, and then as a political officer in various security and procuratorate organs. The timing and location of Cao's major postings suggest that he is probably one of the relatively small number of former Fourth FA cadres who served in East China after 1949. Separated from their former units, many of these individuals became security cadres. Cao probably spent most of his post-1949 career in Jinan, serving in a variety of units within the group army and provincial district structures.

<sup>77</sup>Whitson, 1973, p. 114.

<sup>78</sup>Shi Yuxiao, political commissar of the Nanjing MR and a former associate within the First GA, is the only other MR leader associated with the First FA system.

But such a relatively unusual career path suggests that his downward ties within the Jinan MR are probably not strong, nor terribly significant. He was thus most likely promoted to high posts within the regional command because of the competence and loyalty he displayed in coping with the challenges posed to political work during the reforms, not because he possesses a potentially significant factional power base. His most recent promotion to Lanzhou, however, no doubt occurred in large part because of his loyal service to Beijing as a senior member of the Martial Law Command during the Tiananmen crisis.

Cao's key backers within the Jinan MR may have included Chi Haotian and Song Qingwei. Chi was political commissar in Jinan just before Cao made the crucial move from the Shandong MD to deputy political commissar of the regional command. Song Qingwei succeeded Chi as commissar and probably continued to advance Cao's career. Deputy Commander Yan Zhuo is a likely secondary, lateral associate within Jinan. Yan was commander of the Shandong MD when Cao served as political commissar, and is a strong advocate of military reform. Gu Hui could also be an associate, because of their service together as deputy leaders of Jinan during the late eighties and as leaders of the Jinan MR contingent during the Tiananmen crisis. One possible supporter within the Lanzhou MR could be Deputy Political Commissar Wang Maorun, also a former Jinan cadre (see below).

Some outside observers of PLA leadership politics believe that Cao has become closely linked to Yang Baibing, presumably as a result of his service during the Tiananmen crisis. Although the events of April–June 1989 apparently provided the only basis for contact between the two men, Cao's propaganda and security credentials lend plausibility to this view, as does his membership in the CCP Central DIC. It would also gain further credence if Cao's former associate Gu Hui is a Yang supporter. An association with Yang Baibing would mean that Cao might be forced to choose between two major PLA factions in the future, if the Third FA Faction were to clash with the Yangs in an intensified leadership struggle. For the moment, however, Cao is relatively removed from the center of power, and clearly subordinate in party status to Fu Quanyou, holding no central committee posts.

The only other apparent total outsider within the upper ranks of the Lanzhou MR is the new chief of staff, Chi Yunxiu. Although little information is available on his background, he is probably a veteran of the Guangzhou MR and a specialist in logistics work, promoted to Lanzhou to strengthen rear services capabilities in the northwest. Deputy Political Commissar Wang Maorun has been in the region since 1985, but is a veteran of the Jinan MR. He was promoted to serve as political department director in Lanzhou after long service as a political officer within various field units in Jinan. Lacking any apparent upward patrons (see Appendix C), Wang might attach himself to the more rapidly rising Cao Pengsheng.

The remaining identifiable members of the second-ranking leadership in Lanzhou are relative insiders with rather diverse backgrounds, many with units outside the "mainstream," regionally based field army systems, and thus with few apparent ties to leaders in Beijing. Deputy Commander and concurrent Xinjiang MD Commander Wang Ke is an artillery officer of the Third FA system, although not from East China.<sup>79</sup> Most likely a veteran of the 21st

<sup>79</sup>The previous MD commander, Gao Huangchang (b. 1924), was probably retired recently for age. He was almost certainly a cadre of the First FA system who had remained in Lanzhou after 1949, almost entirely within Xinjiang. He is a full member of the party central committee but will probably step down at the upcoming 14th Party Congress. He is probably very close to Wang Zhen.



Corps, he has few probable strong upward links. His long experience as a top military figure in Xinjiang suggests that he may be serving as Fu Quanyou's chief assistant in maintaining order within Lanzhou. Deputy Commander Sun Jinghua is a veteran fighter pilot and long-term veteran of air force commands, primarily in the Shenyang MR. He has been in Lanzhou since 1987. Deputy Political Commissar Gong Yongfeng is most likely a veteran political officer of the 47th Corps, under the former Fourth FA system. This unit was not closely associated with either the "northern" or "southern" Fourth FA contingents. After returning from Korea in 1958, it was based in Hunan, in the Guangzhou MR, and was transferred to Shaanxi around 1970. Political Department Director Kong Zhaowen is probably a veteran of the Shaanxi MD; he distinguished himself in conducting political work among militia and reserve units in Lanzhou. One notable outsider is Deputy Commander Chen Chao, appointed in 1990. He was transferred into the region from the GSD, where he served as first deputy director in 1982-85, and then as director of the Mobilization Department. Unfortunately, no other information is available on Chen, but he may have been brought into the Lanzhou MR to improve the operational qualities of its forces. Insufficient information is available on the rest of the second-ranking leadership to speculate on their likely affiliations. Xinjiang MD Political Commissar Tang Guangcai is most likely a veteran of the Fifth FA system who has served in Xinjiang since at least 1979. He was a deputy to the 13th Party Congress.

Finally, the little information available on the backgrounds of the current group army leadership suggests that they are insiders. Both commanders were appointed from within the region during the 1990 reshuffles. The head of the 21st Group Army was previously commander of the 47th Group Army, which again suggests an attempt to mix leaders from different group armies.

Overall, despite the high level of personnel turnover experienced in 1990, the general pattern of leadership selection in the Lanzhou MR seems to stem from Beijing's desire to assure stronger, more effective military control over the region, rather than from any narrower factional considerations linked to elite maneuvering in Beijing. In any event, the general diversity of the Lanzhou MR leadership and the sharply contrasting backgrounds of its commander and commissar together suggest that the region will probably be unable to play any significant role in a future pattern of PLA political intervention. Indeed, under conditions of deteriorating political control in Beijing, even a highly cohesive, politically united regional leadership would be forced to devote all its energies to assuring the obedience of the local Muslim and Mongol populations, while maintaining a vigilant border defense.

## **REGIONAL LEADERSHIP TIES: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS**

We shall now summarize the implications of the above analysis of each military region for the four dimensions of personal association mentioned at the beginning of this chapter: upward links with patrons in Beijing, internal associations among regional leaders, downward links with subordinates, and lateral links across regional leaderships.

## Upward Links

Despite years of internal leadership reshuffles and the ascendance of many younger officers to high-level regional command positions, personal links between regional leaders and central PLA leaders and elders are clearly evident in the majority of China's military regions.

The strongest indications of such vertical factional associations are seen in the Beijing area (within both the Beijing MR and the PAP), the Nanjing MR, and the Chengdu MR. Strong links also exist between the center and the Lanzhou MR, but they are primarily of a different type (i.e., dominated by professional loyalty to the center, and not to specific leadership factions), although secondary ties to Wang Zhen and to the Second FA elders also exist. Lesser personally based vertical ties are evident in the Jinan MR, while the least evidence of such associations is found in the Guangzhou and Shenyang MRs.

Considerable diversity exists regarding the type and strength of personal connections to the center, however, presenting major implications for future PLA political involvement by military regions. For example, the Beijing MR leadership is largely divided between a dominant group of officers loyal to Yang Baibing (including many Tiananmen veterans, such as Political Commissar Zhang Gong), and a weaker group likely associated with leading Second FA elders such as Qin Jiwei and Xiang Shouzhi, including the regional commander, Wang Chengbin, but few if any Tiananmen veterans. Wang may also provide a secondary link with the Third FA Faction under Zhang Aiping and Chi Haotian, given his long service within that FA system, but few other possible links with the Third FA are evident in the region's leadership.<sup>80</sup> The only other notable upward link in the region may be with Wang Hai's PLAAF Faction, through deputy commander Yao Xian. The Beijing Garrison Command displays few likely links to Yang Baibing, but probable connections to Qin Jiwei (through Commander Dong Xuelin), and Xiang Shouzhi (through Political Commissar Zhang Baokang, a Tiananmen veteran). In contrast, the PAP Headquarters seems strongly pro-Yang, mainly because of Commander Zhou Yushu (former head of the 24th GA and a Tiananmen veteran) and Political Commissar Xu Shouzeng (a former political officer in the Beijing MR).

Unlike the Beijing area, the Nanjing MR leadership exhibits a more concentrated pattern of links to the center, but one focused on the Second FA elders, not the Yangs. This is mainly a result of Xiang Shouzhi's long tenure in the region, but may also be reinforced by possible links to You Taizhong, through Gu Hui. It is important to note, however, that such links are highly personal, and not usually based upon common career affiliations with the Second FA system.<sup>81</sup> Many Nanjing supporters of the Second FA elders are veterans of other field army systems, including the First FA (e.g., Shi Yuxiao) and the Third FA (e.g., Zhang Taiheng and Jiang Yutian), although the latter ties do provide a secondary link to Zhang Aiping and Chi Haotian at the center. The ambiguity of Nanjing Commander Gu Hui's upward ties provides the only significant possible qualification to the overall depiction of Nanjing as a bastion of Second FA elder influence. While his career background suggests a likely tie with You Taizhong, many knowledgeable observers of PLA factions insist that he is a strong supporter

<sup>80</sup>One possible exception is Deputy Chief of Staff Wu Shuangzhan, a veteran of the 24th GA, formerly associated with the Third FA.

<sup>81</sup>One notable exception is Deputy Commander Guo Tao, a senior veteran of the Second FA system.

of Yang Shangkun.<sup>82</sup> Less significant upward links evident in Nanjing include those with Wang Hai's PLAAF Faction, through Jiang Yutian.

The Chengdu MR also exhibits considerable ties to the Second FA system, again largely through indirect personal associations with specific Second FA elders, not common FA service. The top three posts in the region are held by outsiders with diverse backgrounds, and likely links to the Second FA elders through You Taizhong and (indirectly) Zhang Wannian in the case of Political Commissar Gu Shanqing, Commander Li Jiulong, and Chief of Staff Tao Bojun. Other likely supporters of the Second FA elders are either veterans of the former Second FA corps based in Chengdu (e.g., Deputy Commander Liao Xilong) or probable Deng loyalists holding sensitive regional posts (e.g., Deputy Commander Jiang Hongquan, until recently head of the Tibet MD). Li Jiulong's career also suggests strong ties to Yang Dezhi. The backgrounds of few if any current Chengdu leaders suggest a link with Yang Baibing, despite his long service in the region prior to entering the Beijing MR.<sup>83</sup> Finally, the region may also possess a relatively weak link to the PLAAF Faction, through Deputy Commander Xie Decai.

The Jinan MR contains an extremely diverse leadership group, with several cross-cutting affiliations and no apparent concentration of upward links to any single faction at the center. The region displays some links to Yang Dezhi's Fifth FA system (through Commander Zhang Wannian and perhaps several veterans of the region among the second-ranking leadership),<sup>84</sup> and to Zhang Aiping's Third FA system (through Political Commissar Song Qingwei and Deputy Commander Qu Zhenmou). Zhang Wannian and especially Song Qingwei also exhibit strong, albeit indirect links with the Second FA elders, based on Zhang's service under You Taizhong in the Guangzhou MR and Song's very close career association with Wang Chengbin (below), a follower of Xiang Shouzhi. A secondary upward tie may also exist with the PLAN Faction, also through Deputy Commander Qu Zhenmou (concurrent commander of the North Fleet), although he is also a likely Jinan veteran with career roots in the Third FA system. Finally, one possible upward link may exist with Yang Baibing, through Deputy Political Commissar Qu Jining, a Beijing MR veteran political officer. Unfortunately, details are lacking on the careers of many members of Jinan's second-ranking leadership, thus preventing a more thorough analysis of possible links.

The Lanzhou MR has a relatively narrow base of personal ties to the center, primarily with Wang Zhen. However, it also displays lesser links with individual Second FA elders such as Xiang Shouzhi and Third FA leaders such as Chi Haotian, through Commander Fu Quanyou and Political Commissar Cao Pengsheng, respectively. Of the two leaders, Fu clearly possesses the most direct links to Beijing, perhaps through both Wang Zhen and Xiang Shouzhi. Beyond his possible weak connection to Chi Haotian, Cao might also have indirect links to

<sup>82</sup>The only other possible Yang supporter within the region (as based upon past unit affiliations) is Political Department Director Lan Baojing, the former political commissar of the Tianjin Garrison Command.

<sup>83</sup>As stated above, the inclusion of many outsiders in the top leadership and the fact that Yang's highest post while in Chengdu was deputy political department director suggest that he enjoys few remaining ties to the region. One possible exception is Deputy Political Commissar Shao Nong, a veteran of the region, but also a cadre of the Second FA system.

<sup>84</sup>In general, even though Yang Dezhi previously held high posts in both the Jinan and Wuhan MRs, little evidence remains today of a significant regional presence for the Fifth FA Faction. Moreover, while the Fifth FA system might contain some supporters in the Beijing MR because of its historical affiliation with Northern China, few are evident today in the top leadership of that region.

the Yangs as a result of his close association with Gu Hui, if the latter is indeed a Yang supporter. Overall, however, the weak downward affiliations of Lanzhou's top leaders and the nonmainstream backgrounds of most of its second-ranking officers serve to reduce the significance of such individually based upward ties, thus focusing attention on the common professionalism and loyalty of its leadership to the party as the key characteristic of its links to the center.

The Guangzhou MR displays very weak upward connections overall. The strongest links may exist with the Second FA elders (through former MR Commander You Taizhong), as suggested by the careers of several second-ranking officers: Deputy Commanders Li Xinliang and Liu Xinzeng, and perhaps Li Xilin. Possible ties may also exist with Yang Shangkun, as a result of the regional leadership positions he held in the late seventies and early eighties, and with Yang Dezhi, as a result of his leadership of the Wuhan MR in the mid/late-seventies. Yet these are not clearly indicated by the careers of any current Guangzhou regional leaders.

Finally, the Shenyang MR has few discernible links to the center, unless we assume that Li Desheng retains control of the region, which seems unlikely. The only other factional links may consist of weak connections with Yang Baibing, through Yu Yongbo and Liu Anyuan, and possible links to Xu Huizi and Zhao Nanqi. In a similar manner to the Lanzhou MR, this absence of strong upward personal links to the center again focuses attention upon the assumed loyalty of the region to the party.

### Internal Links

The personal career backgrounds and likely factional ties evident among the leadership of each military region also display considerable diversity. In most cases, however, this is primarily because the commander and commissar of each region are usually associated with different field army systems, regions, or individual units. In two cases (the Jinan MR, and the Lanzhou MR), two "outsiders," each from a different FA system or identifiable faction or region, serve together.<sup>85</sup> In two cases (the Beijing MR, and the Nanjing MR), an "insider" from one particular FA system or identifiable faction is paired with an "outsider" from a different FA system or faction.<sup>86</sup> In one case (the Guangzhou MR), two "outsiders" from the same region but different FA systems are placed in the same region. In the remaining case (the Shenyang MR), a military region is led by two "insiders," although each from a different FA system.

In contrast, the majority of the second-ranking leadership within each MR display considerable similarity of career backgrounds. Many are professional field officers who rose to their current high posts from within the region where they presently serve. This is particularly the case with the Shenyang, Beijing, Nanjing, and Lanzhou MRs. It is less the case for the

<sup>85</sup>This was also the case in the Chengdu MR until Zhang Taiheng was removed and replaced by Li Jiulong. The MR is now led by two former members of the "southern" Fourth FA system. However, each is from a different career background. Commander Li Jiulong is a veteran field unit commander with extensive combat experience within the 54th Corps, including service in the Korean War. Political Commissar Gu Shanqing has none of these credentials, having served largely within a military district in Guangzhou.

<sup>86</sup>Although in the Nanjing MR, Gu Hui and Shi Yuxiao served together as deputy leaders of the Martial Law Headquarters during the Tiananmen crisis.

Guangzhou MR, which combines former Shenyang cadres with long-term Guangzhou veterans in a few key posts (including the chief of staff), and the Chengdu MR, which displays considerable diversity among its second-rank officers. It is least applicable to the Jinan MR, which has a small number of veteran Jinan cadres among its second-ranking leaders.

Combining these two sets of characteristics on the primary and secondary regional leaderships, we can see that the Shenyang MR exhibits the strongest internal leadership cohesiveness (based on unit and regional affiliation), followed, in descending order, by Nanjing, Beijing, Lanzhou, Guangzhou,<sup>87</sup> Chengdu, and Jinan.

### Downward Links

Our observations above suggest that while leadership cohesiveness within most regions may be limited by the checks and balances seen in the commander/commissar relationship (along with the diversity of some second-ranking leadership structures), overall, a high degree of downward, vertical ties exists between many regional leaderships and the lower ranks.

In the Beijing MR, the majority of the leadership (including the political commissar) have served in the region since at least 1985 and many much longer. At least four leading second-ranking officers are probable former primary or second-ranking leaders of Beijing group armies or corps: Deputy Political Commissar Wang Fuyi, Political Department Director Cao Heqing, Deputy Chief of Staff Wu Shuangzhan, and Deputy Political Commissar Chen Peimin. Moreover, probably all of the current leaders of Beijing's group armies are regional veterans. However, most of those leaders with strong field unit backgrounds within the region seem closer to Yang Baibing than to Qin Jiwei and Xiang Shouzhi. If many junior officers within the Beijing MR are opposed to Tiananmen and strengthened party control over the PLA, this characteristic would thus serve to reinforce political instability in the region. In addition, although a veteran of the region, Zhang Gong probably does not enjoy strong links to Beijing's field units, given his continuous service within the regional headquarters since joining the party in 1961.

The leadership of the Shenyang MR displays even stronger downward links, with only one complete outsider (Deputy Commander Tong Baocun) among its ranks. Both the commander and political commissar and many top second-ranking officers are professional field officers and former corps leaders. However, these individuals are distributed across many group armies, which may reflect a desire by the center to strike a political balance among field unit officers within the region, as already noted. This may also explain the apparent mixing of group army commanders and commissars within Shenyang. Yet it is difficult to believe that such limited internal diversity significantly undermines the overall strong leadership unity displayed by the region.

The vast majority of the Nanjing MR leadership are veteran field officers of the region, and several top leaders are also former heads of the region's three group armies, including the political commissar. As with Beijing and Shenyang, the current group army leadership also

<sup>87</sup> Guangzhou and Lanzhou exhibit approximately the same level of internal diversity, but in different ways. The former is largely divided between a cohesive top leadership centered on former Shenyang cadres and a significant cohort of Guangzhou veterans with strong GA-based ties. The latter contains a more diverse top leadership but a larger cohort of regional veterans among the second-ranking leadership, yet with weaker FA ties.

apparently consists predominantly of regional veterans, thus reinforcing the strong downward links enjoyed by the Nanjing leadership. The only individuals lacking significant downward ties in the region are Commander Gu Hui, Political Department Director Lan Baojing, and Deputy Political Commissar Pei Jiuzhou, all complete outsiders from diverse areas. Newly appointed Deputy Commander Zhang Taiheng is an early veteran of the Fuzhou MR, now part of Nanjing.

The leadership of the Lanzhou MR is split between outsiders in the top three posts (commander, political commissar, and chief of staff) and insiders occupying virtually all the second-rank regional positions and the leadership of the Xinjiang MD. As with Shenyang, the regional veterans emerged from a wide variety of units and areas within the region, including former field officers and leaders of key provincial districts.

The Guangzhou and Chengdu MR leaderships also combine outsiders in higher posts with several likely insiders at lower levels, although the overall extent of the regions' downward links is less than in the case of Lanzhou. The chief of staff and two deputy commanders in Guangzhou are probably veteran corps officers of the region, while both deputy political commissars are outsiders. In Chengdu, both the political commissar and chief of staff originally came from other regions, although the new commander had extensive field unit experience in Chengdu during the late fifties and sixties. The remainder of the second-ranking leadership includes at least two outsiders (a deputy commander and a deputy political commissar) but at least four veteran Chengdu field officers.

Finally, the leadership of the Jinan MR exhibits the weakest downward links. Although biographical information on many of the Jinan leaders is relatively scarce, it seems that only two deputy commanders and a deputy political commissar are insiders with downward ties. Only one of these individuals (Deputy Commander Zhang Zhijian) can be positively identified as a veteran corps commander of the region. Moreover, most of Jinan's insiders are probably relatively young, promoted to high posts during the reforms, and thus may not have established strong personal links to subordinates in the region.

### **Lateral Links**

The overall pattern of possible lateral links among China's regional leadership is complex, but certain major features stand out. In Beijing, the most significant interregional association is between Commander Wang Chengbin and the Nanjing MR, given Wang's probable long association with the 31st Corps (formerly from Fuzhou) and his probable link with Deputy Commander Zhang Taiheng. This connection also likely extends to Song Qingwei, the political commissar of the Jinan MR and an individual whose career parallels that of Wang, albeit as a political officer. Song is not seen as a terribly influential political figure within the party and military elite, however. Within the PAP leadership, strong lateral links exist with mainstream PLA units of the Beijing MR, especially with individuals likely associated with Yang Baibing, such as Zhou Yushu. Much greater diversity is evident in the leadership of the Beijing Garrison Command, with links to the Beijing, Nanjing, and Shenyang MRs.

The most broad-based leadership affiliation across China's military regions is between the top members of the Shenyang and Guangzhou MRs, both consisting of Shenyang veterans.

Much weaker lateral links through Shenyang cadres are evident in the Nanjing MR (through Deputy Political Commissar Pei Jiuzhou) and the Jinan MR (through Chief of Staff Yang Guoping). In addition, although definitely of secondary or tertiary importance, Shenyang may enjoy some lateral influence in a variety of other regions through links with former Fourth FA cadres with early experience in the northeast, e.g., Nanjing MR Commander Gu Hui, Chengdu MR Commander Li Jiulong, Lanzhou MR Political Commissar Cao Pengsheng, and Beijing MR Deputy Political Commissar Chen Peimin.

The most significant link between the Guangzhou MR and military regions other than Shenyang is with the Nanjing MR, through former Guangzhou veteran Gu Hui (a likely associate of many second-ranking officers), although Gu probably exerts little personal influence among Nanjing officers under his command.<sup>88</sup> A much weaker link may exist between Guangzhou and the Jinan MR, through Jinan Commander Zhang Wannian, a "southern" Fourth FA veteran of the former Wuhan MR.<sup>89</sup> A weak link also exists with the Beijing MR, through Guangzhou Deputy Political Commissar Gao Tianzheng, the former political commissar of the 38th GA.

The high percentage of outsiders among the Jinan MR leadership obviously suggests considerable lateral links. In addition to those connections with Guangzhou, Chengdu, and Nanjing (through Zhang Wannian in the former two cases and, in the latter case, through Song Qingwei), other links exist with Shenyang (through Yang Guoping, as mentioned above), and Beijing (through Deputy Political Commissar Qu Jining). The extent and diversity of Jinan's lateral links serve to undermine its overall importance as a potential political factor in a future elite struggle, as already noted. A widespread presence in the region of Tiananmen veterans might have provided some cohesiveness to Jinan's leadership, but few such individuals are present.

In addition to its high-ranking ties to Beijing and Guangzhou (through Wang Chengbin and Gu Hui, respectively), the Nanjing MR also displays a very strong link with the Lanzhou MR, through the relationship between Nanjing Political Commissar Shi Yuxiao and Lanzhou Commander Fu Quanyou (both long-term veterans of the former First Corps), and through the past relationship in Chengdu between Fu and Zhang Taiheng. A less significant link may exist with the Chengdu MR, if Gu Hui and Li Jiulong established a relationship on the basis of their common service in the Jinan MR and their "southern" Fourth FA affiliation. The only other notable lateral link in Nanjing is with Tianjin, through Nanjing Political Department Director Lan Baojing (the former commissar of the Tianjin Garrison Command).

The Chengdu MR displays significant lateral links with the nearby Guangzhou MR, primarily through Political Commissar Gu Shanqing. Weaker links to Guangzhou probably also exist through Chief of Staff Tao Bojun and Deputy Commander Ma Bingchen (likely "uprooted" former Wuhan and Kunming MR cadres), and Deputy Political Commissar Wang Yongning,

<sup>88</sup>A lesser Guangzhou-Nanjing link may be provided by Guangzhou Deputy Political Commissar Liu Xinzeng, a veteran of Nanjing's 12th Corps.

<sup>89</sup>Other former members of the "southern" Fourth FA elite among the top regional leadership include Li Jiulong (Chengdu MR commander), Gu Shanqing (Chengdu MR political commissar), Ma Bingchen (Chengdu MR deputy commander), Gu Hui (Nanjing MR commander), and Li Xilin (Guangzhou MR deputy commander). However, as noted above, this type of shared FA service probably provides a very weak basis for personal affiliation among these officers, given the diversity and relative discontinuity of their careers. One possible exception is probably the relationship between Zhang Wannian and Li Jiulong.

a definite veteran of the Guangzhou MR. Newly appointed Commander Li Jiulong also serves as a basis for a relationship with the Jinan MR, because of his past service as Jinan commander in the latter half of the eighties, and his links to fellow Fourth FA veteran and probable Yang Dezhi associate Zhang Wannian.

The leadership of the Lanzhou MR exhibits several lateral links, yet none concentrated in any one area, and many dependent upon the personal associations of a single individual. As noted above, the most significant link is between commander Fu Quanyou and both Zhang Taiheng and Shi Yuxiao in Nanjing, through common service in a regional command and within a field unit, respectively. Secondary lateral links are provided by the less influential regional political commissar, Cao Pengsheng, through his ties to the Jinan MR.<sup>90</sup> Cao may also enjoy a link with the Nanjing MR, as a result of his past service with Gu Hui, as noted above. The only other significant lateral link may be with the Guangzhou MR, through Chief of Staff Chi Yunxiu, a possible veteran of that region.

Finally, common martial law service during the Tiananmen crisis may also serve to establish lateral associations among leading regional officers, although such links must be taken as problematic and almost certainly secondary to ties based upon unit and regional affiliations. The top leaderships of the Beijing MR, the PAP Headquarters, and the Baijing Garrison Command all contain very high percentages of Tiananmen veterans. Such Tiananmen-based links are also evident in the Shenyang MR (although primarily at the GA and MD levels), the Nanjing MR (including several top regional leaders, both insiders and outsiders), and to a lesser extent in the Jinan MR (again, primarily at the GA and MD levels). Other individual military leaders with notable Tiananmen service are found in the Guangzhou MR (Commander Zhu Dunfa), and the Lanzhou MR (Political Commissar Cao Pengsheng). The Chengdu MR is apparently the only region currently without Tiananmen veterans.

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<sup>90</sup>Lanzhou's links with the Jinan MR might be supported by Deputy Political Commissar Wang Maorun, a long-term veteran of that region.





### **PART THREE**

## **MILITARY ORGANIZATION AND PARTY CONTROL**



## MILITARY ORGANIZATION AND PARTY CONTROL

Any attempt to evaluate possible military involvement in leadership conflict in China must take into consideration those organizational features of the PLA that most directly influence the capacity and susceptibility of military units to become involved in an escalating succession struggle among the factional groupings postulated in the previous section. These include the formal and informal structures of command and control over China's armed forces, the general patterns of recruitment, promotion, and personnel mobility among regional forces, the nature and extent of lateral communication among regional officers, and the relationship between regional military structures and local party and government organs.

Chapter 6 presents an overview of the command and control system directing the PLA, the PAP, and China's reserve and militia forces, as well as the related system of party control. Chapter 7 examines major organizational features influencing the internal cohesiveness of regional forces, lateral communication among regional officers, and local civil-military relations, and concludes with some overall observations on the dilemma for central control posed by the regional military.

Part Three argues that China's systems of military command and control and party supervision have not been professionalized and fully institutionalized as a result of the reforms. On the contrary, they embody the most basic characteristics of the politico-military system as a whole: They are highly personalized, centralized along vertical lines, and compartmentalized. As a result, the systems exhibit major irregularities in procedure and potential ambiguities in authority relationships that could prove to be highly destabilizing in the event of a future leadership crisis at the center, especially one involving the breakdown of elder control and the emergence of open rifts among the successor leadership. In addition, this part of the Report shows that the overall structure of the regional PLA presents a complex mix of middle- and low-level unit-based identification, limited lateral communication, and, in most cases, leadership fragmentation at the upper levels, largely through repeated personnel reshufflings. The resulting pattern of vertical compartmentalization and high-level leadership diversity among most military regions is compounded by the virtual absence of significant links between regional and local military leaders and their civilian counterparts. Such features reflect the effects of limited professionalization and deliberate "divide and rule" mechanisms of leadership control over the military and suggest a major dilemma between the requirements of efficiency and control in Beijing's handling of the PLA. In partial contrast, PAP, reserve, and militia forces exhibit stronger links with local party and government organs, except in China's major cities, where the centralized PLA command and control structure probably exerts a predominant influence. Overall, PLA combat units exist largely as cohesive yet politically passive entities. However, the potential remains for individual PAP, reserve, and militia forces and military units or groups of units to act independently in a severe political crisis or, more likely, to be used as pawns in political struggles among leadership factions.

## **6. MILITARY COMMAND AND CONTROL AND PARTY SUPERVISION**

Given China's secretive political system, it is no surprise that detailed, reliable information on the command and control apparatus directing the PLA and the related system of party control is extremely scarce. Even organizational charts of leading organizations such as the CMC are considered highly sensitive. Thus, our understanding of these mechanisms derives largely from unofficial, highly subjective sources (e.g., accounts by current and former PLA officers) or reports on single cases of military action. While keeping in mind that such sources of information are probably inaccurate in some areas and almost surely incomplete, it is nonetheless possible to piece together a plausible overall picture of China's military command and control apparatus, including its system of party control.<sup>1</sup>

### **COMMAND AND CONTROL: MAIN PLA FORCES**

As with other Chinese organizations, the PLA command and control apparatus is highly centralized, vertically structured, and very personalized. The formal chain of command over combat units runs from the CMC in Beijing, through the GSD to the military regions, and then from each MR to subordinate group armies, each composed of divisions, brigades, regiments, battalions, and companies (see Appendix F).<sup>2</sup> As a result of decisions taken in 1985, daily operational control over units of service arms stationed within a military region (i.e., infantry, artillery, armor, air units, etc.) was transferred from the headquarters of the respective service arm in Beijing to the regional command.<sup>3</sup> This concentration of command was made possible by the formation at that time of the group armies, combining units from the various service arms. Each group army was built upon a former field army corps, as noted in Chapter 2.

The central headquarters of the PLA command and control apparatus is located in the Western Hills area of Beijing. It functions not only as a communications center, but also as an intelligence center and a combat control center. Immediately adjacent to the command and control headquarters (hereafter referred to as the C/C HQ) are key offices of the GSD, including the First Department (in charge of combat operations), the Second Department (in charge

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<sup>1</sup>For our purposes, it is essential to examine not only the standard command and control apparatus of the Chinese military, but also the characteristics of the political work system and the structure of party control. In an internal political crisis, the latter could prove to be even more important than the former in influencing the behavior of regional military forces.

<sup>2</sup>The smallest independent combat unit in the Chinese military is normally the company, because it is the lowest unit containing mess facilities.

<sup>3</sup>In contrast, the command relationship between the MRs and the PLA Navy (PLAN) appears to remain quite limited. According to Paul Godwin, the three fleet commands are directed by PLAN headquarters in Beijing, although operational control of the land-based naval air forces probably lies in the MR, because of the coordination required between PLAFAF and the People's Liberation Army naval Air Force (PLANAF) units in the defense of naval facilities. The MR may also have command over light, fast attack naval craft, while destroyers, frigates, missile-carrying crafts and submarines "could well be deployed into combined task forces under the fleet commanders with no responsibility to the MR commanders beyond operational coordination." See Godwin, 1988, pp. 64, 65, and 122. We should also add that the Second Artillery contains a number of missile bases that appear to overlap military regions. Such bases almost certainly come directly under the command of the Second Artillery Headquarters in Beijing. I am grateful to Ellis Melvin for this latter point.

of foreign military intelligence), and the Third Department (in charge of domestic military intelligence). The GSD First Department is directly under the control of the GSD director, while the other departments of the GSD normally are managed by GSD deputy directors. The C/C HQ is staffed on a 24-hour basis by personnel of the First Department, although personnel from the Second and Third Departments can also enter the center and participate in meetings as needed, providing information to those leaders responsible for directing and supporting PLA units. These usually include personnel from the GPD, GLD, GSD, the CMC, the AMS, and certain high-level officials of the CCP CC.

Access to the C/C HQ is strictly controlled by armed personnel of the CMC Administrative Bureau. Entry authorization does not, however, derive from an individual's formal position in the military hierarchy. As in all other key areas of the Chinese politico-military system, personal relations and trust dictate how power is established and exercised. In the past, either Mao Zedong or his personally selected representative determined who could enter the C/C HQ. Today, no one, including CMC Chairman Jiang Zemin, is permitted to enter it without the prior approval of Deng Xiaoping or his authorized representative. Moreover, no one inside the C/C HQ can issue orders to move military units without the prior authorization of Deng or his representative.

Operational orders to military units originate from the C/C HQ only. The method of communication throughout China is either through wireless radio transmitters or secure underground telephones and telexes. The latter method is obviously far more confidential and is therefore most often utilized. Radio transmissions and telexes are received by communications stations located at every level of the military hierarchy down to at least the division.<sup>4</sup> Each station is capable of communicating directly with the C/C HQ in Beijing. Access to these stations is strictly controlled. Within combat units, only the commander, political commissar, and chief of staff are allowed entry (along with ordinary staff members who operate the equipment). Deputy commanders and political commissars normally do not have independent authority to receive and send orders for military units.<sup>5</sup> In addition to the transmitter stations, the commander and political commissar at both the military region and group army levels (as well as their counterparts in command of the provincial MDs, the PLA AF, and PLAN, and the Second Artillery) can also receive orders through secure "hot line" telephones in their offices. These are directly connected to the C/C HQ in Beijing. The unit chief of staff does not have such a telephone. Deng Xiaoping (or his designated representative) is normally the only individual who can use these phones.

Under normal conditions, orders to move military units originate only from the C/C HQ. Without such orders, PLA commanders can move only very small military units. A division can move about 30 men (i.e., a platoon) without prior authorization, but if those men leave the area controlled by the division, the movement must be reported to the relevant group army command immediately afterward. A group army can independently move a company,

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<sup>4</sup>It is unclear if regimental headquarters also have such communication stations.

<sup>5</sup>According to informants, the formal authority of deputy commanders and deputy political commissars within PLA units is generally greatly inferior to that of the commanders and commissars, and even below that of the chief of staff. Deputies essentially function as assistants to commanders and commissars. They perform largely administrative tasks within the regional headquarters and have no authority over units, except as representatives of the commander and commissar. Thus, even when they are sent down to subordinate units to lead them in various missions, deputies can issue combat orders only on behalf of the MR commander.

but must notify the military region if the unit leaves the region controlled by the group army. Finally, a regional commander can independently move a battalion, but this unit cannot leave the limits of the military region. To do this, it must obtain the prior approval of the CMC. Moreover, any unsanctioned movement of PLA units in China can be very rapidly detected, since the domestic intelligence network of the PLA (reportedly attached to the Third Department of the GSD)<sup>6</sup> maintains listening posts and cadres throughout the country and would immediately report any such troop movements to the CMC.

Mobilization orders usually result from meetings held in the C/C HQ. Participants are determined by Deng Xiaoping or his representative, not on the basis of institutional position or established regulations. Normally, these would include Deng's closest colleagues on the CMC and the politburo, probably both the members of the CMC standing committee (Jiang Zemin, Yang Shangkun, Liu Huaqing, Yang Baibing, Qin Jiwei, Chi Haotian, and Zhao Nanqi), and any members of the politburo standing committee involved in military affairs. It is unclear whether orders result from votes taken by participants, but apparently no formal regulation requires specific individuals to be present and participate in decisions to move troops. Opinions can certainly be expressed and some form of "discussion" can take place, but the decisive authority is exercised by Deng Xiaoping alone. However, as suggested above, Deng may have provided authorization for a specific leader to exercise ultimate authority in his absence, or in the event of his death or incapacitation. Under Mao Zedong, that individual was reportedly Wang Dongxing, Mao's former bodyguard, a trusted politburo member and former commander of the 8341 Guard Unit in charge of defending the Western Hills compound and the top party leadership.<sup>7</sup> Under Deng, it is unclear who, if anyone, possesses such authority. Some observers speculate that it must be Yang Shangkun.

Orders to move combat troops are normally carried out in several stages and can utilize a combination of communication methods. Under normal conditions, an order to mobilize units of a group army for movement to other parts of the country will take one of two general forms. It most often consists of a simple telephone call on the above-mentioned secure line from Deng Xiaoping or his representative. This is usually made directly to the commander and commissar of those military regions in charge of the relevant group armies. However, the C/C HQ also has the authority and ability to circumvent the chain of command and issue mobilization orders directly to any military unit down to the division level (see Appendix F).<sup>8</sup>

The telephone would particularly be used if units of group armies from several military regions were being moved. In more routine cases of smaller troops movements, the initial order could be in the form of a coded telex message issued in the name of the CMC, and formally transmitted by the First Department of the GSD, whose representatives would normally participate in discussions leading up to the issuance of the order. Hand-written documents are not usually employed for initial orders and hence no specific signature of any leader is needed. The secret code number for a specific high-level leader such as Deng, Yang

<sup>6</sup>It should be noted that this military surveillance role of the GSD Third Department is not accepted by some knowledgeable PLA analysts. Our source for this information is a former PLA official with long experience in Beijing.

<sup>7</sup>The former 8341 Unit, formally under the General Office of the Central Committee, has been renamed the Central Guard Unit, as noted in Chapter 5.

<sup>8</sup>Interviews with former PLA officers, Hong Kong. Also see Paul H. B. Godwin, "Professionalism and Politics in the Chinese Armed Forces: A Reconceptualization," in Dale R. Herspring and Ivan Volgyes, eds., *Civil-Military Relations in Communist Systems*, Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1978, p. 223.

Baibing, or Chi Haotian may be included in a telex, but it is apparently not required. Moreover, the military communications network is a closed network. Any orders to move troops sent to a regional command could only come from either the C/C HQ or from a mobile communications unit accompanying Deng Xiaoping when he travels outside Beijing. In the case of a verbal mobilization order by phone, regional commanders and commissars would readily recognize the voice of Deng or his designated representative (e.g., Yang Shangkun), since they are frequently in contact. In general, direct, personal communication is valued over impersonal, formalized contact.<sup>9</sup>

At the time the initial order to move troops is received, or shortly thereafter, a second message is received by the relevant regional headquarters. This is usually in the form of a coded telex issued in the name of the GSD First Department but also sent from the command center. Less commonly, a written order can also be issued, which is often delivered by a special military aircraft. Such an order does not require the specific signature of any individual. It contains detailed information relevant to the implementation of the original mobilization order, describing, for example, which units will go where, by what means of transport, and at what time. In the case of specific, known contingencies (such as military action against Taiwan), this order will usually consist of a numbered prearranged plan known to all relevant commanders. However, it will not be obeyed without the prior receipt of the mobilization order. Conversely, in the event of a large-scale movement of troops involving several regions, the initial mobilization order alone will not suffice. Detailed implementation orders must also be received, for obvious, practical reasons.

The military rail transport system is a major component of the PLA's command and control apparatus.<sup>10</sup> Both the relevant military transportation units of the Ministry of Railways and the railway transport departments within the military logistics system must be informed of any initial mobilization order. These two vertically structured, overlapping bureaucracies (the former a part of the ministerial system under the State Council and the latter a subordinate system of the GLD) must cooperate at several stages to make appropriate arrangements for all rail transport.

Under normal conditions, a specific transportation plan for individual military units would be drawn up by the transport bureau of the logistics department within each relevant military region and then approved by the relevant authorities of the GLD in Beijing. Once the transport plan is completed and approved, it is communicated to the military transport bureaus of the Railway Ministry located in the municipalities at the relevant regional and group army levels. These offices are responsible for the implementation of the plan, in coordination with several PLA cadres working within each military transport bureau and office. Once trains have been allocated and placed under military use, they are constantly tracked and controlled by the Railway Ministry.

PLA units are thus normally unable to move troops and equipment without the formulation of a transport plan and the issuance of implementation orders by the military transport system of the Railway Ministry. At a minimum, a military commander would need to have sup-

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<sup>9</sup>Some analysts of the PLA assert that mobilization orders must be nonverbal in form, and always require the signature of several (usually three) members of the CMC to be valid. The above information, derived from interviews with former PLA officers, contradicts this assertion. For more on this issue, see below.

<sup>10</sup>See Appendix F.



porters at high levels within the Railway Ministry in order to move troops without formal authorization from the CMC. The same holds true for air transport, which can move only very small numbers of troops and equipment.

One variation to the above command procedure for moving troops under normal conditions is for Deng Xiaoping or his representative to order the commanders and political commissars of the relevant military regions (along with their staff officers and advisers) to come to Beijing for a meeting. Such a meeting could take place in one of several possible locations, including the AMS or the GSD First Department, but probably not in the command center. Discussions would cover both the initial mobilization order and the subsequent implementation orders. The former would normally be conveyed by Deng or his representative to the commanders and commissars attending the meeting, while the latter would be conveyed separately by relevant GSD personnel (usually within the First Department) to the staff officers and advisers accompanying the commanders and commissars.

Once the relevant regional headquarters receive orders to move units under their command, the MR commander will then issue orders directly to the relevant group army command(s). These orders usually also take the form of an initial verbal order by telephone or a coded telex message, followed by a detailed implementation order. Under the most routine conditions, a written order can also be used, usually signed by the regional chief of staff. Throughout the entire troop movement, the commanders of the relevant group army units remain in constant contact with both their regional headquarters and the GSD First Department staff located within the C/C HQ, reporting on their position while also receiving new information and orders. Such communication is usually by radio or, when possible, coded telex. Unit compliance is also monitored on the scene by the GSD through representatives of its Third Department, which are normally sent down from MR headquarters at the time of mobilization.

Under most circumstances, a deputy regional commander will accompany a group army when it is mobilized, acting on behalf of the MR commander.<sup>11</sup> In those instances when several group armies are mobilized, each will normally be accompanied by a leading officer from the regional headquarters. This individual could be a regional deputy commander, chief of staff, or even a deputy political commissar. This practice of placing representatives from a superior level in subordinate units during emergency or combat mobilization is also utilized below the regional and group army levels. Deputies within a group army command will usually accompany a mobilized division, while a deputy division leader will accompany most mobilized regiments. In a similar fashion, deputy regimental officers will normally be assigned to mobilized battalions, and deputy battalion leaders will be placed within combat companies. The type of higher-level representative assigned to a particular unit is often determined by the importance of that unit. Within individual group armies, specific divisions, regiments, or battalions are usually designated as "main force units" (*zhu li bu dui*), i.e., the best equipped, often most combat-ready units. These would have deputy commanders or deputy political commissars assigned to them. Non-main force units might be accompanied by a deputy chief of staff or even a deputy political department director.

<sup>11</sup>If only a single group army of a particular military region is mobilized, however, the regional commander (as well as, perhaps, the regional political commissar) might personally take command of that group army, leaving the deputy leaders in charge of the remaining GAs and the MR headquarters.

At each level, officers from superior units serve a crucial liaison function between the combat units to which they are assigned and their own headquarters. As suggested above, the scope of their responsibilities is essentially determined by the commander of their headquarters, and normally includes not only coordination and logistics activities, but also direct command authority. Thus, a deputy regional commander can issue orders to group army heads on behalf of the regional commander. He can even bypass (or remove) a group army commander altogether, issuing orders directly to the troops. As a whole, therefore, the regional headquarters can exercise considerable operational control over PLA units, *once those units have been mobilized by authorities in Beijing.*

### COMMAND AND CONTROL: PAP, RESERVE, AND MILITIA FORCES<sup>12</sup>

In addition to the regular group armies, central command and control over two other types of armed units should also be mentioned: the PAP, and regional military forces, including both active reserve units and armed provincial militia. The PAP was formally established in Beijing on April 5, 1983, although provincial PAP units called "*zongdui*" or "general units" (equivalent in status to an army division) had existed before that time in at least ten provincial-level administrative areas. These had been formed by merging former PLA internal defense divisions with the armed police, border defense police, and fire brigades in those areas.

Today, the PAP performs a wide range of public security duties, including the maintenance of domestic order, the protection of key civil installations and government offices, border protection, and the general enforcement and defense of Chinese law. PAP units are distributed throughout China, sometimes far from leadership organs. They include many types of organizations: internal defense units, border defense units, fire brigades, water resources and electric power units, communication units, and various academies and schools. There is generally one PAP division (*zongdui*) for every province and provincial-level municipality and autonomous region, one regiment (*zhidui*) for every prefecture or prefectural-level municipality, one battalion (*dadui*) for every county or county-level city, one company (*zhongdui*) for every township or large town, and one platoon (*fendui*) for every village. The bulk of these forces (and those of greatest significance to this Report) are composed of the above-mentioned internal defense units, which stand today as the regime's first line of defense against any form of urban public protest and hence as a key buffer between the PLA and society.

As part of the state machinery responsible for public security, the PAP is formally subordinate to the public security apparatus of the Chinese government, under a system of "level-by-level" command and control. Under peacetime conditions, this means that daily operational control of individual PAP internal defense units at the provincial, municipal, county, and township levels is exercised by the public security organs at each locality. Such PAP units also accept the leadership of higher PAP organs such as the PAP GHQ in Beijing, which is directly under the Ministry of Public Security. However, the authority of such superior PAP organs is largely limited to matters of general policy and administration, as well as the

<sup>12</sup>Much of the information provided in this section derives from various unpublished sources provided by very knowledgeable journalists and professional analysts of the PLA. These individuals have requested that the author not reveal their names or the nature of the publications used. Additional, supplementary information was obtained from Godwin, 1988.

overall planning and development of PAP units.<sup>13</sup> In peacetime, an order to a local PAP unit would be issued by the public security department at each level. Thus, the PAP GHQ cannot order a PAP internal defense unit in a given locality to perform an operational mission, although it does possess command authority over a significant number of forces in the capital, organized into two general units.<sup>14</sup>

Despite such direct lines of operational control through the public security apparatus, however, the PAP is technically subject to a tripartite structure of command and control, consisting of the party committee, the military, and government departments at various levels. The civilian party organ exercising the greatest influence over the PAP is the Political and Legal Affairs Committee of the CCP CC and its subordinate offices within the provincial, prefectural, and county party committees. This organ is directly subordinate to the party politburo and the central secretariat. It is headed by a secretary who is also usually a member of the central secretariat. The current secretary of the political and legal affairs apparatus is Qiao Shi, a member of the politburo standing committee and central secretariat and a veteran cadre of the party security and intelligence apparatus.<sup>15</sup>

The political and legal affairs committee assumes major responsibility for all security and law-related affairs in the PRC and oversees the implementation of party policies and guidelines regarding such affairs within the ministries of public security, state security, and justice. Hence, as the supreme party leadership organ of the Ministry of Public Security, the committee undoubtedly exerts considerable influence over the activities of the PAP and its leading officers, providing political guidance in many areas. However, it apparently does not exercise formal operational authority over PAP units.

Of even greater significance to the PAP command and control system is the military's party organ: the CMC. As an armed force of the PRC, the PAP must ultimately obey the centralized leadership of this organization, the supreme party organ controlling all forces in China. Under peacetime conditions, CMC authority over the PAP is largely limited to the determination of basic questions of policy and principle. Below the CMC, such decisions are implemented by the PLA general departments (at the central level), the provincial military districts (at the provincial level), and the military subdistricts (at the prefectural/municipal level). The extent of direct control exerted over PAP units by the CMC and its subordinate offices increases significantly under wartime conditions, essentially supplanting the authority of the public security apparatus. In addition to safeguarding the state's internal security and maintaining public order, PAP units may be called upon in wartime to act as local forces under the leadership of local PLA organs. For example, provincial military district authorities would likely take control of provincial PAP divisions, while military subdistrict authorities would direct PAP regiments at the municipal level and below.<sup>16</sup> Eventually, during wartime conditions, some PAP units may even be incorporated into PLA main force units or converted into new combat units. Such units would then come under the direct control of the relevant main forces command, i.e., the group army or military region headquarters.

<sup>13</sup>See Appendix G.

<sup>14</sup>See below and Chapter 5.

<sup>15</sup>See Chapter 4 for details on Qiao Shi's career and likely political associates.

<sup>16</sup>See Appendix G.

The above general features of the PAP command and control system were in evidence during the Tiananmen crackdown. The PAP's initial response in the capital was apparently directed by the Beijing Municipal Public Security Department (through the PAP GHQ), as part of a normal reaction to civil unrest during peacetime. As events escalated, however, this system was clearly overwhelmed, and PAP units in Beijing were eventually placed under the control of the Martial Law Command (as indicated in Chapter 5), which also directed the activities of regular PLA units in the capital. In other words, with the establishment of martial law, the PAP was eventually placed under wartime command and control procedures.

Since Tiananmen, the PLA's level of direct influence over the PAP has increased noticeably, especially in the Beijing area, and probably in most other major cities as well. As a result, the distinctions between the two structures have been significantly reduced in such locales. Because of the PAP's lackluster performance in May–June 1989, the mainstream military has essentially taken over its top leadership, as stated in Chapter 5.<sup>17</sup> The heads of the PAP GHQ in Beijing now consist entirely of professional PLA officers, especially those from the 24th GA located just north of Beijing. The commander of the PAP GHQ is Zhou Yushu, the former commander of the 24th GA and a close supporter of Yang Baibing. Moreover, a second general unit (*zongdui*) of the Beijing PAP GHQ has been formed from regular PLA forces (probably of the 24th GA), as discussed in Chapter 5. As with other PAP units throughout China's cities, this second general unit has been made more effective as a tool in controlling social unrest by acquiring better riot control training and equipment. While the PAP was believed to contain "several hundred thousand" members prior to Tiananmen, estimates of its total membership now run to nearly one million.<sup>18</sup>

As a result of such organizational and leadership changes, the urban PAP has probably been more thoroughly incorporated into the vertical CMC command structure, at least in the largest cities. In such localities, municipal public security departments still no doubt exercise authority over routine PAP administrative matters and direct individual PAP units guarding prisons, bridges, warehouses, railway yards, etc., while the original pre-Tiananmen system of overall local control probably still predominates in China's medium and small cities, counties, and towns. However, any future use of PAP forces against the residents of Beijing, Shanghai, Tianjin, and other major municipalities will probably be controlled from the outset by the CMC and implemented through the relevant MR and MD authorities and their subordinate units.

Despite the CMC's increased operational authority over the urban PAP, the above general features of the command and control system suggest the existence of at least two distinct and potentially conflicting lines of leadership influence over subordinate PAP units in Beijing. On the one hand, the strengthening of PAP forces in the capital, largely through the incorporation of officers and troops from the 24th GA, strongly indicates that the PAP GHQ and the two general units under its direct command are now under the formal control of a Yang Baibing supporter: Zhou Yushu. On the other hand, the party control structure provided by the political and legal affairs apparatus of the public security system presents a second line

<sup>17</sup>It should be noted, however, that funds for the PAP are still provided by the state sector, through the Ministry of Public Security, and not the defense budget of the PLA.

<sup>18</sup>Ellis Melvin has pointed out to the author in a personal correspondence that such major increases in the size of PAP units may have led to a decrease in the number of PLA garrison troops in major cities, and perhaps a decrease in garrison units. However, we have not confirmed such a hypothesis.

of influence over the PAP. As mentioned above, this structure is controlled by Qiao Shi, a member of the politburo standing committee. Qiao is regarded as a strong supporter of Deng Xiaoping, and has few apparent ties to the Yangs. Moreover, as noted in Chapter 4, he is seen by some informed analysts as an individual possessing considerable "behind-the-scenes" influence by virtue of his long tenure as a leading cadre within the party's security and intelligence apparatus. Indeed, such experience may provide Qiao Shi with significant influence over PAP forces not only in Beijing, but throughout the entire country. Even more important, it may also gain him significant support among military figures in the mainstream PLA.

Such a potential conflict in leadership influence over the Beijing PAP may prove to be of considerable importance in the future if major popular unrest erupts in the capital in the context of a paralyzing succession struggle. Under such conditions, control over the PAP, as the frontline guarantor of public order, may become a focus of contention between Yang Baibing and those supporting Qiao Shi, assuming the two leaders end up on opposing sides. On balance, however, Yang Baibing's influence over those who directly command PAP units in the capital suggests that he would likely enjoy the advantage in such a confrontation.

China's regional forces may play a less significant role than the PAP in a future pattern of social unrest and leadership strife. The total number of reservists probably exceeds five million men, while the entire militia structure contains over one hundred million personnel. In the past, most reserve and militia units were very poorly trained and equipped and thus of marginal military significance. The 1984 Military Service Law (MSL) and a crucial 1985 CMC Directive on military reform initiated the modernization of reserve and militia forces, however, largely to fill a gap created by the reduction of active PLA units. Under the MSL, existing militia units began to be integrated into a single reserve force structure organized along the lines of conventional military units.

As part of this process, more proficient individual reserve divisions and regiments were first formed in the late eighties, manned by veterans, demobilized officers and soldiers, and armed militiamen. Such integrated units were seen as a framework around which the larger militia forces could be organized as reserves for modern combat.<sup>19</sup> Although relatively few in number (perhaps totaling no more than 150,000 men), these "elite" units have gradually been combined administratively with more capable, better trained elements of China's militia force (termed the "armed basic militia," or the "primary backbone militia" totaling approximately 4.3 million in the late eighties) to provide unified combat support for the regular group army forces in wartime. The remaining "common" militia is now essentially a labor force for economic production and emergency relief work, existing only on paper as a combat reserve organization.<sup>20</sup>

Despite the administrative integration of reserve and militia forces, however, each type of unit still retains distinctive features in training, organization, and mission. As their name implies, active reserve units are primarily intended to supplement regular PLA forces as necessary. They are expected to perform combined arms and joint service operations, similar

<sup>19</sup> Reserve units recruit most of their leadership cadres from the ranks of demobilized PLA officers and soldiers, while the majority of the rank-and-file consists of militiamen.

<sup>20</sup> Even the backbone militia engaged in considerable economic work during the reforms, however, thereby undermining its military preparedness. See Lee, 1989, pp. 101, 108-109.

to the group armies. Hence, their training includes conventional combat operations, political work, and logistics, often conducted with the assistance of PLA units. In contrast, the traditional duties of the armed militia have placed it much closer to the populace. Historically, provincial militiamen performed three main peacetime duties: (1) economic production (including agricultural work and service as "shock work" groups in township and village enterprises, factories, mining operations, key construction projects, etc.); (2) assistance during major emergencies such as natural disasters; and (3) local public security work (e.g., guarding factories and roads, protecting key targets, and assisting the PAP in maintaining general law and order). They also now engage in some propaganda work, summarized as "... supporting the movement for spiritual civilization."<sup>21</sup>

Since Tiananmen, the central leadership has sought to augment the combat support function of "integrated" reserve and militia forces by giving them significant responsibility for internal security. The ostensible goal of such activities is to use such forces to supplement the "front-line" role of the improved PAP in handling future cases of large-scale social opposition to the regime, thus providing a further buffer between society and the regular combat units of the PLA. In fact, some newly formed reserves deal primarily with internal security matters. These so-called "ready reserve" units (RRU) are very different from their "backbone" or "elite" predecessors, intended to augment the combat role of the group armies. Their primary mission is to reinforce the PAP to suppress unrest, and only secondarily to reinforce the PLA against a foreign threat. RRUs are fully integrated into the PLA command and control system and led by active duty officers and NCOs. They are overwhelmingly composed of entire divisions situated in urban areas, unlike "ordinary" active reserve units organized by battalions and companies at the township or factory level.<sup>22</sup>

As part of this process, local party control over both types of reserve units has been strengthened in recent years, primarily through the military district command structure under the CMC-MR system. This structure includes the MD, military subdistrict (MSD), and the People's Armed Forces Department (PAFD) at the provincial, municipal, and county government levels.<sup>23</sup> The offices of this MD system are now taken as the "... military departments of the party committees at their respective levels." This means that the orders and requests they issue regarding the reserves are to be implemented as though they had come directly from the responsible local party organs, centered on the People's Armed Forces Committee (PAFC) at each level.<sup>24</sup> In mid-1991, the Lanzhou MR thus held a meeting of MD, MSD, and PAFD personnel to issue instructions for reserve divisions and regiments to develop rapid reaction capabilities for both border defense *and* the maintenance of internal stability.

Local public security agencies are also closely involved in this effort, however. Chinese official sources appearing since Tiananmen often indicate that the additional responsibility for safeguarding domestic stability taken on by reserve units is to be carried out through cooper-

<sup>21</sup>See *Hebei Ribao*, April 29, 1991, p. 3, in *FBIS-CHI*, May 7, 1991, p. 43.

<sup>22</sup>I am indebted to an unnamed PLA analyst for this information on the ready reserves.

<sup>23</sup>See Appendix G. PAFDs exist at the village and enterprise level.

<sup>24</sup>See *Jiefangjun Bao*, June 2, 1990.

ation with such organizations.<sup>25</sup> This development suggests the continued existence of the pre-Tiananmen dual line of command and control over active reserve forces (probably including the RRUs as well), combining the vertical, centralized military structure of the CMC with the horizontal, civilian structure of the local party and public security apparatus. This duality of control is reflected in the leadership of a typical provincial PAFD. The chairman is usually the provincial party secretary (who also serves as the first political commissar of the military district), while the deputy chair is the military district commander or political commissar. PAFD members include the head of the provincial public security bureau, the provincial representative of the ministry of state security, the commander of the PAP *zongdui*, and the director of the provincial legal affairs department.<sup>26</sup> However, local civilian elites probably play a secondary role to the party-directed command and control system of the military in wielding authority over reserve units in major cities. Thus, as with the PAP, it is most likely that the party-directed CMC and its subordinate organs will play an active and early role in directing reserve units against civilian protesters in the future.

Informants suggest that the armed militia also plays an important role in this area, despite the efforts to refashion the reserves into an internal security force. Militia units in many major urban centers have reportedly been given more intensive training in riot control than active reserve forces. They have also acquired veteran PLA officers of the Tiananmen crackdown, in order to provide experienced leadership in suppressing social protest movements. Unlike the active reserves, militia units remain more fully under the formal control of provincial and local authorities, both state and military. They are considered part of the provincial government, which takes responsibility for all nonmilitary aspects of their operation (e.g., the provision of housing and food). Provincial MDs perform similar oversight responsibilities on the military side. Most daily administration of militia work occurs at the sub-provincial level, however. Military subdistricts and civilian PAFD are responsible for carrying out overall military conscription, wartime manpower mobilization, and peacetime training for both the militia and the active reserve forces. They also supervise militia involvement in various forms of economic production activities. It is questionable, however, that provincial and local authority over the militia extends to independent control over its use in times of crisis, especially in the post-Tiananmen era. Under such circumstances, direction of the militia would almost certainly be combined with the CMC-led command and control apparatus, at least in China's major cities. In other words, regional, provincial, and municipal military authorities would exercise primary command responsibilities, presumably coordinating internal security duties with the PAP.<sup>27</sup>

The above description suggests that China's military command and control system has not been transformed into a more Western-style, institutionalized structure, as some analysts believe. It retains the basic authority characteristics of the Chinese regime as a whole, i.e., it is (1) highly centralized along vertical lines (particularly in the case of regular PLA forces); (2) highly personalized; and (3) displays significant procedural variations, especially concern-

<sup>25</sup>At the end of 1991, the Ministry of Public Security informed its subordinate departments that reserve units would be deployed in China's major cities during holiday periods, and that reserve officers would join special joint patrols with police officials, beginning in 1992. See *Jiefangjun Bao*, July 28, 1991; and *SCMP*, December 4, 1991. For emphasis on the need for coordination between reserve units and public security organs, see *Nanjing Daily*, October 11, 1990.

<sup>26</sup>I am again grateful to the above-mentioned unnamed PLA analyst for this information.

<sup>27</sup>See Appendix G.

ing the form and routing of orders. Thus, it is not surprising that under abnormal conditions of political crisis, command and control procedures can diverge significantly from those used in normal times. For example, during past crises, orders to move regular troops have been sent by individual leaders such as Mao Zedong or Zhou Enlai, directly from the command center in Beijing to the commanders of individual armies, bypassing both the GSD and the MR levels.<sup>28</sup> Moreover, at various times written orders with the signatures of one or more high-level CMC members have been given to mobilize regular troops, instead of either telephone or telexed orders.<sup>29</sup> In addition, the importance of local party and public security authorities within the command and control system for the PAP, reserves, and militia presents the possibility that such forces could become more responsive to provincial and municipal leaders in a prolonged crisis at the center.

Such a military control structure clearly possesses certain basic strengths and some very significant weaknesses. It was created to serve the interests of a single party leader enjoying both unchallenged authority and the respect and trust of most (if not all) of his military colleagues. Under such conditions, the structure allows the supreme leader to wield virtually absolute control over the PLA as his personal instrument of power, largely unhindered by legal or institutional constraints or the objections of less authoritative individuals. At the same time, however, the system is apparently very brittle and prone to abuse and factionation. Its cohesion and effectiveness depends to a great extent on a leader's ability to ensure his personal access to the command center in Beijing and to maintain his personal authority within the party apparatus and with his subordinates in the military hierarchy. Confusion and conflict could easily emerge in such a military control structure if the leadership in Beijing were unstable and it became unclear exactly who was in charge at the top, or if someone other than the dominant authority figure (or his representative) issued mobilization orders to military units.

Such confusion is particularly likely under present conditions in China, when individuals with little independent personal authority and few contacts with the PLA such as Jiang Zemin and Li Peng occupy the highest formal positions of power in the regime. As suggested above, a leader's formal position as chairman of the CMC or general secretary of the CCP does not automatically give him access to the C/C HQ, nor does it give him full authority to move PLA units throughout the country.

The implementation of a more explicit, "formalized" procedure for mobilizing troops will not eliminate such problems and guarantee centralized control over the military. Such a procedure would almost certainly be instituted by Deng or an equivalent leader with ultimate au-

<sup>28</sup>In the early seventies, Zhao Enlai reportedly communicated directly with army corps leaders to mobilize troops for support against Lin Biao, thereby bypassing the relevant MR command, which was judged to be unreliable.

<sup>29</sup>A story appearing in the Hong Kong press claimed that during the Tiananmen crisis, the commander of the 38th Group Army of the Beijing Military Region attempted to justify his failure to obey orders to suppress the pro-democracy demonstrators by asserting that the orders did not have the required number of signatures and hence were "illegal." No evidence has yet appeared to substantiate such a story. But even if true, the above description of the military command apparatus clearly indicates that a simple phone call to the CMC command center would have established the "legality" of the order. As a former member of the PLA stated to the author, "The commander of the 38th was looking for an excuse to not carry out the order and so tried to apply a legalistic defense to a non-legal system. Other military officers recognized the clear authority of Deng and his associates without the need for a certain number of signatures and proceeded to implement the orders to suppress the Tiananmen demonstrators." Such a statement confirms the essentially personalized and irregular nature of the Chinese command and control system.



thority within the PLA, and not as a result of agreement among leaders as part of an accepted, institutionalized decisionmaking process. As a result, its effectiveness would remain dependent upon the continued authority of the supreme leader and his continued willingness to utilize it. It would thus essentially retain an arbitrary quality and would not necessarily be observed by the military at all times, particularly if used by a lesser leader during a crisis.

Finally, the establishment of a separate, high-level command headquarters for the control of rapid deployment forces during a crisis would also not alter the basic characteristics of China's command and control apparatus. Such an innovation was reportedly discussed (but not decided upon) at an enlarged meeting of the CMC held in April 1992. This new HQ would stand somewhere between the MR and GA headquarters in the command hierarchy and would exercise direct operational control over a number of designated rapid deployment units within regular group armies.<sup>30</sup> However, authority over its activities would be retained by the GSD and thus ultimately by the CMC, thus inevitably exposing it to the same vagaries and informal characteristics of the regular command and control system.<sup>31</sup>

### THE PARTY CONTROL SYSTEM

China's military command and control apparatus is further complicated by the system of party control that permeates all levels of the PLA. In general, professional military commanders in China are seen to be in charge of "purely" military functions (e.g., combat operations and training) while political commissars are responsible for areas relating to politics, ideology, and overall troop morale. This division of responsibilities became particularly prominent under the reforms, when a deliberate attempt was made to increase the overall authority of commanders and reduce the application of political and ideological criteria to operational decisions and activities. As a result, commissars were often supposed merely to "support" decisions made by commanders, rather than to take a leading position in many matters, as in the pre-reform period. Because of such apparent changes, a least one scholar of the PLA concluded that Deng's reforms had "... elevated the military commander to the dominant position in military units."<sup>32</sup>

Such a conclusion was probably incorrect, and is certainly not applicable to today's PLA. Despite increases in the authority given to commanders, the ultimate guarantor of the loyalty and discipline of individual PLA combat units continues to be a tripartite system of political controls, consisting of the GPD political commissar system, the party committee system, and (since 1978) the CCP discipline inspection committee system. All three systems are well-established down to the regimental level, while representatives of each system exist at lower

<sup>30</sup>Rapid deployment units are generally defined as light mechanized forces able to be quickly transported within a several hundred to thousand kilometer radius within their assigned military regions. They would presumably be trained and equipped to carry out either a conventional defense mission or internal security duties. At least three group army divisions have thus far been designated as rapid deployment units, although none are fully operational. These include the 162nd Division of the 54th GA (Jinan MR), the 63rd Division of the 21st GA (Lanzhou MR), and the 149th Division of the 13th GA (Chengdu MR). In addition, some entire group armies (e.g., the 39th GA of the Shenyang MR) are also considered to be rapid deployment units. The author is indebted to Tai Ming Cheung for this information, conveyed in a personal correspondence.

<sup>31</sup>See Tai Ming Cheung, "Fit to Fight," *FEER*, May 28, 1992, pp. 24, 26.

<sup>32</sup>See Joffe, 1987, p. 166.

levels, but in a more ad hoc fashion.<sup>33</sup> As shown in Appendix H, the party committee system is ostensibly subordinate to the party central committee in Beijing, while the political commissar system is under the GPD (and thus the CMC), and the discipline inspection system is formally linked to both the CMC and the party central committee.

The party committee system plays the dominant role within this structure. Indeed, the importance of the party committee system has been strengthened since Tiananmen. According to David Shambaugh, it acts both to ensure that the party controls the gun, and "... to serve as a transmission belt for propagating the party line (*fangzhen*), policy (*zhengce*), principles (*yuanze*), orders (*mingling*), and directives (*zhishi*) throughout the military system." Regarding the issue of unit control, its ostensibly "collective" character is designed to inhibit any unit leader (commander or commissar) from using troops in an arbitrary manner. As party members, both the commander and the political commissar of a unit must obey the decisions of the committee, and if they have disagreements, they are to submit to the party committee decision.<sup>34</sup> Hence, the party committee system serves as a logical mechanism for assuring compliance with orders issued by the military command and control system, and should not be confused with the political commissar structure under the GPD.

In reality, however, this system of political control does not operate entirely along the lines of "formal" authority described above, and indeed presents many ambiguities for power relationships within military units. This, in turn, complicates any assessment of the relative influence over units exerted by different party and military departments at the center. For example, although the party committee system is supposedly subordinate to the party central committee, this latter organ does not exercise actual ultimate power over military units. This clearly resides exclusively with the party CMC.<sup>35</sup> This political reality explains why, in Chinese communist history, the chairman of the CMC has invariably also served as the general secretary of the party and hence the head of the central committee. In such a situation, the CMC acts, in effect, *on behalf of* the central committee in exercising ultimate power over party committees and military units. It follows that a problem would emerge if the two leadership posts were held by different individuals, assuming no elder patron such as Deng Xiaoping held the real power behind the scenes.

Further complications exist over the nature and scope of authority exercised by the discipline inspection system. In contrast to the formal lines of authority outlined above, the GPD actu-

<sup>33</sup>Our presentation of the formal party control system draws heavily upon Shambaugh, 1991, especially pp. 546–550. He states that at the battalion level, political commissars are known as political instructors (*jiaodaoyuan*), at the company level as political directors (*zhidaoyuan*), and at the platoon and squadron level as political workers (*zhengzhi gongzuoyuan*). At the military region, provincial military district, and group army levels, party committees exist in departmental units (*ke dangwei*), while a single party committee (*dangwei*) exists at the division, brigade, and regimental levels. Shambaugh incorrectly states that battalions have "basic level" party committees (*jiceng dangwei*). A reliable Hong Kong PLA analyst informed the author that battalions actually contain general party branches (*zong zhibu*), except for independent battalions, which have a party committee (*dangwei*). Companies have party branches (*dang zhibu*), while party cells (*xiaozu*) exist at the platoon and squadron levels. Finally, DICs exist down to the regimental level. At the battalion and company levels, there are discipline inspection offices. The latter unit also conducts discipline inspection work within platoons and squadrons.

<sup>34</sup>Shambaugh, 1991, pp. 548–549.

<sup>35</sup>The establishment of a government CMC under the NPC in 1982 to parallel the party CMC did not erode this party control system. Indeed, from the perspective of command and control over the military, the distinction between the two bodies is largely meaningless. Their leading personnel are identical, and control over military units remains firmly lodged in the hands of Deng Xiaoping and his closest associates. Indeed, statements by Chinese leaders have insisted that the government CMC serves largely to further strengthen and assure the party's absolute control over the PLA. For example, see *Renmin Ribao*, June 24, 1991, p. 5.

ally exercises control over discipline inspection work in military units today, as indicated in the discussion of Yang Baibing's power base presented in Chapter 4. However, the ability of DIDs to monitor the performance of party members at each level of the military is significantly weakened because of the subordinate status of its leadership and its dependent relationship regarding the unit party committee. A deputy political commissar, not the commissar, usually heads the DID office at each level in the PLA down to the regiment. Moreover, as a member of his unit's party committee, the DID office head is subject to committee control. This obviously creates a conflict of interest that is almost invariably resolved in favor of the heads of the party committee (i.e., the commander and commissar).<sup>36</sup> As a result, according to informants, the discipline inspection arm of the PLA is usually not taken very seriously by military officers, except in those rare cases when DID personnel from a superior unit in the military hierarchy intervene at lower levels to investigate officer behavior.<sup>37</sup>

This situation is further complicated by the ambiguities inherent in the authority relationship between commander and commissar, arising from their very different responsibilities, which in turn reflect fundamental differences between the roles of the GSD and the GPD. The GSD obviously deals with issues of greatest concern to professional commanders (and to chiefs of staff). Under conditions of external conflict or severe domestic instability requiring the mobilization and use of significant numbers of troops, it would be expected to play a significant leadership role over the party committees, given its key responsibilities within the operational chain of command in implementing the orders of the CMC.

Nevertheless, in providing leadership on political matters, the GPD obviously interacts most closely with and usually directs the behavior of the commissars within the PLA party committees. These individuals (along with the director of the unit political department, directly subordinate to the GPD political commissar system) normally constitute roughly half of the standing committee of each party committee.<sup>38</sup> More important, within each party committee, the leading party secretary normally exercises dominant influence over the deliberations and decisions taken by the committee, despite official references in official documents to the primacy of "party committee decisions." According to informants, this important post is usually held by the political commissar of the unit, especially at the military region and group army levels. The commander usually holds the position of deputy secretary.<sup>39</sup> Thus, while

<sup>36</sup>This line of influence is indicated by an arrow in Appendix H.

<sup>37</sup>This conclusion largely contradicts Shambaugh's assertion that "the discipline inspection committees may conceivably pose a threat to the traditional Party committee system" and that "the intimidation factor is enough to cause a great deal of consternation among Party committees" (p. 550). It is possible, however, that the influence of the DID system has grown in recent months as a function of the assertion of GPD influence within PLA units.

<sup>38</sup>As Godwin states (1988, p. 62), the political commissar functions as the link between the unit party committee and political department, and the political department functions as the executive arm of the party committee. The standing committee of the party committee at each of the upper levels of the military usually includes the commissar, the commander, the chief of staff, two deputy commanders, two deputy political commissars, the director of the unit political department, and the director of the unit logistics department.

<sup>39</sup>This information derives from interviews with former PLA members. Unfortunately, David Shambaugh is unclear on this point. He cites a Chinese document stating that the commander and commissar of a unit are "directly subordinate to the leading cadre (*shouzhang*) of the Party committee," but does not specify which individual(s) are to be included among such "cadre." Moreover, although he correctly observes that provincial party secretaries hold only a ceremonial post as chief political commissar within military region and provincial district commands, he does not comment on the actual relationship between PLA commissars and leading secretaries at that level. He merely states that the two posts are held by different individuals at the "intermediate" level and usually by the same person at "lower" levels of the PLA hierarchy. If, by intermediate level, he means military region and

commanders may have been given greater control over the implementation of operational decisions, for example, the political commissar (and hence the GPD) continues to wield considerable de facto authority within PLA units.<sup>40</sup>

The GPD's relative control over military units is further augmented by its strong influence over officer selection and surveillance. This occurs largely through the activities of the discipline inspection system and especially the internal military security system under the GPD Security Bureau (*baowei bu*). Despite the actual limitations on the authority of the former system, it nevertheless provides a means for collecting sensitive information on military leaders, as does the latter, more powerful system. In routinely monitoring, on a covert basis, the activities of all high-ranking officers, operatives at lower levels of the military secret police can report directly to officials within the GPD in Beijing, thus bypassing their immediate superiors within the military region, group army, and division commands. Both systems, and especially the security bureau, thus allow the head of the GPD to exert considerable informal influence over the activities and dispositions of high-level regional officers, adding to his general ability to shape personnel appointments through recommendations made to Deng Xiaoping and Yang Shangkun, as stated in Chapter 4.<sup>41</sup>

Together, these factors suggest that the GPD enjoys a distinct advantage over the GSD in influencing power relationships within military units. In the event of a full-blown political crisis at the center, the GPD's role could prove to be absolutely decisive.<sup>42</sup> During such times of severe internal disarray, the GPD's "informal" sources of influence could come into play, supporting its formal lines of authority through the commissar system to control the party committee decisionmaking system within PLA units. This could provide the head of the GPD with a crucial advantage within the overall command and control structure over his counterparts within the GSD and the GLD, perhaps even over any decision to mobilize troops, whether made in response to an unambiguous order from Beijing or to a chaotic environment where no clear authority exists within the CMC. In the latter case of the virtual collapse of central political rule, the efficacy of GPD control over the PLA would ultimately depend upon the factional strength of its leader. In particular, the extent to which the head of the GPD could manipulate the party committees of military units to serve his personal interests under such anarchic conditions would depend on his prior success in placing personal followers within those committees. It would also depend on the changing evaluations made

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group army commands, then his observation directly contradicts information supplied by our interviewees. However, Shambaugh does state that within the party committee, "Party secretaries are the principal vehicle to ensure the subordination and loyalty of the PLA to the CCP" (pp. 548-549). Finally, we should add that the practice of placing civilian party secretaries in largely ceremonial leading positions within the PLA party apparatus extends below the provincial level. For example, the prefecture party committee secretary usually holds the post of military subdistrict first political commissar.

<sup>40</sup>This line of influence is also indicated by an arrow in Appendix H.

<sup>41</sup>We should add that the internal security bureau of the Chinese military is apparently entirely separate from the "civilian" internal security apparatus of the state and party structures. Such a closed system of military surveillance stands in contrast to the military counterintelligence units employed in the former Soviet Union and many of the former communist states of Eastern Europe, which were directed by the state security agencies under the command of the KGB or its equivalent. For example, see Thomas S. Szayna, *The Military in a Postcommunist Czechoslovakia*, RAND, N-3412-USDP, Santa Monica, California, 1992.

<sup>42</sup>According to Yang Baibing and other PLA leaders, political commissars played a crucial role in ensuring PLA loyalty to the leadership during Tiananmen. See Tai Ming Cheung, "The PLA and Its Role Between April-June 1989," p. 10.

by both his followers and by regional military leaders in general of his overall standing in the political game at the center.

## CONCLUSIONS AND OBSERVATIONS

The lack of clear, institutionalized procedures in China's system of military command and control and the complex, ambiguous relationships within the party committee system could produce disastrous consequences in a future domestic political and social crisis. If elders were to completely disagree over whether to use troops against demonstrators or, more likely, if an order were issued to the military by a nonelder against the wishes of elders or of other lesser leaders, the resulting chaos at the center could lead to a situation where different contending factional leaders all issued plausibly "acceptable" orders.<sup>43</sup> As long as military leaders below had no strong, personal ties with one or another of the contending factions, the logical tendency in such a situation might be for them to behave strictly in accordance with "formal" regulations, and obey the orders of the chairman of the CMC. But if an individual party leader with strong factional ties to sections of the military or with considerable influence over the political control apparatus under the GPD were to contradict the CMC chairman in a political crisis, there would likely be enormous pressure on some units to disobey the chain of command. Conversely, other units might be paralyzed by internal conflicts.

What would happen, for example, if during a post-Deng, post-Yang succession struggle, Jiang Zemin, as CMC chairman, directly ordered specific PLA units to provide him with support against Yang Baibing? If Yang then issued his own countermanding orders as secretary-general of the CMC, to both PLA units and to the political control system of the military, the regime would conceivably face the potential of armed conflict among PLA units. The likelihood of such conflict would ultimately depend on various political calculations made by the individual military leaders involved, based largely on their personal ties to Jiang and Yang and their overall assessment of the balance of power in Beijing. In other words, any "formal" or "accepted" command and control procedures would most likely be subordinated to the general political struggle, and might ultimately be utilized as weapons in that struggle.

The PLA command and control system did not come close to collapsing in this manner prior to and during the Tiananmen crackdown of June 3–5, 1989. Approximately 150,000 to 200,000 troops from at least twelve group armies were rapidly mobilized and transported to the Beijing area during the period April–June.<sup>44</sup> Once in the Beijing area, they were deployed in a relatively efficient and effective manner through a Martial Law Headquarters composed of top military and party leaders (including both central and regional leaders, such

<sup>43</sup>Indeed, one analyst of the Chinese military has stated that at least four Chinese leaders could have reasonably claimed to exercise authority over PLA forces during the Tiananmen crisis: (1) Zhao Ziyang as CCP general secretary; (2) Premier Li Peng as the top government leader responsible for domestic security; (3) Yang Shangkun as president of the PRC and CMC secretary-general; and (4) Deng Xiaoping as the de facto dominant leader of China and (at that time) chairman of the CMC. See Richard J. Latham, "China's Party-Army Relations After June 1989: A Case for Miles' Law?" in Richard H. Yang, ed., *China's Military: The PLA in 1990/1991* (The Sun Yat-sen Center for Policy Studies Yearbook, National Sun Yat-sen University, Kaohsiung, Taiwan), Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1991, p. 112.

<sup>44</sup>Michael Byrnes, a U.S. military specialist on the PLA, offers a somewhat higher estimate. He believes the total number of troops brought to Beijing was approximately 200,000–250,000, from 16–18 group armies. See Byrnes, 1990, p. 139.

as the deputy commanders and commissars of participating MRs) and reportedly under the overall command of GSD Director Chi Haotian. The MLH was almost certainly directed, in turn, by a small group under the leadership of key elders such as Deng, Yang Shangkun, and Wang Zhen. Throughout the crisis, both commanders and commissars reportedly played instrumental roles in commanding and ideologically preparing troops.<sup>45</sup>

The large number of troops ordered to Beijing was almost certainly not required in order to provide a balance among contending factions within the PLA and the party, as some outside observers suggested at the time. There were probably several alternative reasons for the massive show of force. One was to intimidate the demonstrators, hoping to force them to disperse peacefully. A second was to show that virtually the entire military was behind the leadership's actions, thereby preventing any serious defections from both the PLA and the CCP. Indeed, units from at least three military regions were involved in the final assault on Tiananmen Square on the night of June 3–4, 1989.<sup>46</sup> A third reason was to implicate the most significant military leaders in the crackdown, thus hoping to deprive them of a basis for challenging the leadership in the future. A fourth reason was to ensure the successful completion of the martial law mission, even in the unlikely eventuality that troops from the Beijing MR or elsewhere mutinied. A final reason may have been to provide an opportunity for testing the rapid mobilization of elements of the newly formed group armies.

However, the apparent success of China's command and control apparatus in directing the PLA during the Tiananmen crisis largely derived from the fact that Deng Xiaoping (supported by other elders) was in control in Beijing. Many well-informed analysts believe that certain regional leaders engaged in considerable foot-dragging when complying with CMC mobilization orders during the early stages of the crisis largely because of uncertainty as to who was in control at the top. They insist that at least some MR leaders (particularly those in the more "liberal" reform areas such as Guangdong) were unwilling to respond quickly to orders from Beijing as long as Zhao Ziyang was resisting Deng and others in the leadership over the use of armed force against the demonstrators. Only when Deng unambiguously confirmed to military leaders that he was still firmly in command in Beijing did virtually all commanders and commissars unhesitatingly comply with CMC orders. This controversial assertion requires further examination. If true, however, it would provide a telling confirmation of the essentially personalized aspect of China's command and control system, and the dangers such a system poses to future political stability in China.

<sup>45</sup>Tai Ming Cheung, "The PLA and Its Role Between April–June 1989"; and Gerald Segal, "The Chances of a Coup D'état," in Yang, ed., 1991, p. 55.

<sup>46</sup>The attack from the west was led by units of the Beijing MR, while the attacks from the east and south included units of the Shenyang and Jinan MRs and the 15th Airborne Army based in the Guangzhou MR. The northern suburbs of Beijing were secured by elements from the Shenyang MR. See Chapter 5.

## **7. REGIONAL MILITARY STRUCTURES**

Little is known about the internal personnel structure of Chinese military units at the regional level, the extent of lateral contacts occurring among regional officers, and the existing relationship between local civilian and military elites. Yet an understanding of such phenomena and the nature of Beijing's efforts to ensure continued control over them have a central bearing upon any assessment of the character of future military involvement in an elite struggle. In particular, such factors relate most directly to the issue of internal cohesiveness among military regions and group armies, and their ability to interact outside the formal control mechanisms used by the central authorities. These, in turn, provide a basis for evaluating the potential for such units to emerge as independent actors or factional pawns in the larger politico-military system. This chapter begins with an examination of personnel mobility and leadership exchanges within regional military units, then presents a discussion of the nature and extent of lateral communication and contacts occurring among such units. It ends with a brief overview of the transformation that has occurred in civil-military relations at the local level and some tentative conclusions and observations.<sup>1</sup>

### **PERSONNEL MOBILITY AND LEADERSHIP EXCHANGES WITHIN MILITARY REGIONS**

The limited information available on the recruitment, promotion, and transfer patterns of officers and soldiers within Chinese combat units presents a complex picture combining uniformity with diversity, internal cohesiveness with potential fragmentation. Our analysis will begin with some relatively brief observations concerning the basic recruitment and promotion patterns evident at the lower, middle, and upper levels of the system and end with a discussion of the regional effects of the military leadership reshuffle of 1990.

In the Chinese military, neither rank-and-file soldiers nor officers are recruited entirely from within a particular military region.<sup>2</sup> The Beijing MR, for example, draws only an estimated 40 percent of its personnel from within the region, particularly from Hebei and Shanxi provinces. Another 40 percent comes from nearby military regions, especially the Jinan MR (i.e., Shandong and Henan), while 20 percent are recruited from a variety of more distant areas. In other military regions, the proportion of soldiers and officers recruited from within the MR is higher (perhaps as high as 70 percent in some cases), but intentionally drawn from all the provinces of the region, while most of the remaining 30 percent come from nearby areas. In general, military regions do not contain soldiers from extremely distant provinces (e.g., southerners in northern regions) because of adjustment problems related to food, climate, and dialect.

Most individual PLA units contain a mixture of soldiers from several provinces, although in some few units most of the soldiers are from the same area (e.g., almost all the soldiers of the

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<sup>1</sup>As with our discussion of the command and control system, the following analysis should be taken as tentative, since it also relies to a great extent upon a narrow base of information received through interviews with current and former PLA officers, as well as knowledgeable observers of the PLA in China and Hong Kong.

<sup>2</sup>Most rank-and-file soldiers in the PLA are conscripted youths in the 18–22 age bracket. See Lee, 1989, p. 15.

38th Group Army are from Hebei).<sup>3</sup> The soldiers of the Beijing Central Guard Unit responsible for the protection of the top party leadership are mostly chosen from the poorer areas of Henan and Shandong, since it is believed that less educated, more rustic soldiers will display greater unquestioning loyalty to the regime. In addition, many (but not all) officers of the CGU are reportedly from Deng Xiaoping's home province of Sichuan.

The overwhelming majority of ordinary PLA soldiers come from the peasantry. Similarly, while the number of officers recruited from urban areas has increased under the reforms, the majority can also be classified as peasants, particularly those at the lower levels (i.e., below regimental commander). Moreover, despite improvements in the overall educational level of officers and soldiers, the most basic units of the group armies (i.e., platoons, companies, and battalions) are still largely manned by individuals with only the most rudimentary military skills and with almost no knowledge of the outside world beyond what is told to them in party newspapers and by political commissars. Many ordinary soldiers are illiterate, as in the past.<sup>4</sup> Thus, when one speaks about fundamental transformations in the outlook and behavior of the PLA during the past decade, one is still talking about only a relatively small yet important minority of the officer corps (i.e., the most educated and cosmopolitan elements), particularly those serving in Beijing and China's other major cities.

Personnel mobility within the military (both vertical and horizontal) is minimal at all levels, except among the top officers of the regional and central commands. Virtually all rank-and-file soldiers spend their entire three-year tour of duty within a single company. The vast majority (perhaps as high as 95 percent) of officers remain within a single regiment, serving in posts from platoon leader to battalion commander. The most promising career officers often jump from platoon leader to a post in their company headquarters after attending a junior military academy.<sup>5</sup> Only two recent events provide exceptions to this general pattern of personnel immobility at the lower levels of the PLA. During the Sino-Vietnam border war of 1979 and for some years thereafter, soldiers who distinguished themselves in combat were sometimes promoted to serve as junior officers (e.g., platoon leaders) in different companies. Similarly, combat-experienced junior officers were sometimes promoted to serve as more senior officers in different regiments. Also, during the major troop reductions of 1985-86, many capable junior officers in demobilized units remained in the military and were placed with new units.

Lateral mobility increases as officers enter the middle ranks of the PLA. Most officers will stay within their original regiment as they move up. However, after reaching the rank of battalion commander or political instructor, a minority of officers will usually be promoted to a regimental headquarters outside of their original regiment. Yet in virtually every case, that new regiment will still be part of the officer's original division. Similarly, the vast ma-

<sup>3</sup>One interviewee stated to the author that, as a general rule, no more than an average of one-third of total personnel (officers and soldiers) in individual PLA units come from the province in which the unit is based.

<sup>4</sup>Of course, soldiers serving in GAs near major cities and in the prosperous southern provinces near Hong Kong no doubt have a somewhat better understanding of the outside world and a higher educational level than those in more remote areas. Yet these individuals still constitute only a small minority of the rank and file.

<sup>5</sup>To be promoted above the company level, most career officers then attend intermediate-level military academies, after which they are usually appointed deputy battalion heads. To be promoted above the division commander level, most officers will then attend an advanced military academy or the NDU. These institutions can also include officers of the rank of deputy division head and regimental head. Political officers attend the same types of military schools as do the professional commanders, and also study at the NDU.



jority of those few high-level regimental officers promoted to a different division command and those few upper-ranking divisional officers promoted to a new group army headquarters will remain within their original group army and military region, respectively. In short, almost all officers will remain within their original group army structure during the course of their military careers.

As this pattern of promotion suggests, the vast majority of officers who make it into a group army headquarters have come up through a single regional structure, and usually through a single group army (or, before 1985, a single corps). Those few individuals (estimated by one source as perhaps 1 to 5 percent of the total) who enter the lower levels of a group army command from a different military region are almost always graduates of higher military academies or the NDU. Thus, for most high-ranking PLA officers, the personal and professional associations established within their own group army structure provide the basic foundation for the factional network (i.e., their career "lifeline" as one informant described it) that will provide them with leverage in moving into the top tiers of the PLA.

The level of lateral mobility in the PLA increases significantly among officers at the highest levels of the regional structure, beginning with those individuals at the top of the group army command, i.e., the commander and political commissar and their deputies. Lateral mobility is especially high among regional commanders and political commissars, although by no means absolute. One informant estimates that, in recent years, approximately one-quarter of those officers serving at the deputy group army leadership level and above were brought in from another military region, usually after a tour of duty in either the NDU or one of the central departments in Beijing. The remaining three-quarters of the regional leadership are products of their original regional command, however, even though some may have also spent time outside in the NDU, a high-level military academy, or a central department.<sup>6</sup> This 3:1 ratio of insiders versus outsider among high-level regional officers was reportedly somewhat closer to 9:1 before the reforms, particularly among group army leaders. The reason for such higher levels of lateral mobility at the top of the regional hierarchy is twofold: to broaden the professional experience of talented senior officers, and to separate them from their factional "lifelines" within the group army.

Below the regional command, relatively extensive lateral personnel shifts among all levels of the hierarchy can occur during so-called cadre exchanges (*ganbu jiaoliu*). These are periodically carried out within the party, state, and military, often to facilitate better communication between vertical bureaucracies. In the PLA, they are also intended to impede the emergence of unit and regionally based factional networks.<sup>7</sup> Such exchanges include both direct lateral exchanges of officers at the same level in the hierarchy and either promotions or demotions. The most extensive example occurred in 1985. Approximately 70,000 officers were transferred and promoted to new divisions, regiments, battalions, and companies, usually

<sup>6</sup>These figures are only rough estimates, based on the subjective evaluation of a former PLA officer in Beijing. Our analysis of the regional military leadership certainly suggests, however, that vertical promotions from within a group army structure remain the norm within most MRs.

<sup>7</sup>On the importance of cadre exchanges in party and government, see *Liaowang* (Overseas Edition), No. 32, August 6, 1990, p. 1, translated in *FBIS-CHI*, August 15, 1990, p. 22; and *Wide Angle*, No. 215, August 16, 1990, pp. 14-15, translated in *FBIS-CHI*, August 24, 1990, pp. 32-34.

within the same group army or division. A smaller number (perhaps as few as 30,000) were similarly exchanged or promoted across different group armies and regions.<sup>8</sup>

While the overall pattern of lateral officer mobility thus remains relatively restricted (especially below the group army command), rigid top-down control over personnel decisions is also a basic characteristic of the system, with the center exercising ultimate authority over the disposition of all high-level officers. Platoon leaders are routinely appointed by company and regimental commanders and commissars, company-level officers are determined by division leaders, and battalion-level officers are determined by group army heads. Regimental commanders and commissars and deputy divisional heads are appointed by the commander and political commissar of the military region. The GPD in Beijing, in consultation with the CMC secretariat, formally appoints all officers at the level of division commander and above. All such upper-level decisions, however, are subject to the approval of the CMC leadership, which usually means Deng Xiaoping.<sup>9</sup> But as suggested in Chapters 4 and 6, Deng's approval of most military personnel moves is probably heavily influenced by background information and evaluations of candidates provided by the GPD, as well as opinions expressed by leading CMC members such as Yang Shangkun and Liu Huaqing.

Beijing will often consult with regional military leaders prior to making personnel decisions. These officers naturally seek to place trusted followers within their command headquarters and in top posts within their group armies. Since the central authorities often want to select subordinates who are not personally associated with the regional commander and commissar, however, their preferences are often ignored or downplayed in the selection process.<sup>10</sup> Group army and regional heads can frequently influence central decisions through their evaluations of candidates, however, in a manner similar to the GPD in Beijing. Moreover, when the center sends representatives down to the MR and GA levels to check on such evaluations, commanding officers will often seek to control the information provided, so as to tilt the selection process in their favor. This tactic may also occur at lower levels of the regional PLA, i.e., in deliberations over placements below the division command level. The overall effect is probably to diminish somewhat the ability of superiors to break up vertical factional networks and to maintain a "check and balance" among unit leaders at each level.

Finally, periodic reshuffles of high-level regional officers have also served, in part, to prevent the emergence of vertically structured factions in China's military regions. Regional military leaders have been shifted at fairly regular intervals since the early seventies, particularly in 1973, 1980, 1982, 1985, 1987, and 1990. This suggests a major increase in Beijing's ability to control the regional military commands and basically refutes William Whitson's notion that field army-based regional associations of military leaders provide a check on the power of the center. The military shifts of 1982 and 1985, implemented by Deng Xiaoping after he became CMC chairman at the Sixth Plenum of the party central committee in June 1981, are particularly notable in this regard. They were far more extensive than the previous exchanges of regional commanders and commissars, involving many retirements, dismissals, and new ap-

<sup>8</sup>Again, these figures are only rough estimates, based on the same source.

<sup>9</sup>Interviews, Hong Kong. Also see Tai Ming Cheung, "Uncertain Loyalties," *FEER*, April 4, 1991, pp. 29-30.

<sup>10</sup>This was less true prior to the mid-eighties, when extremely powerful senior PLA leaders (e.g., Yang Dezhi, Li Desheng, and Xiang Shouzhai) held top regional posts. Such individuals exerted considerable influence over high-level personnel decisions within their regional commands, as suggested by our analysis of the regional leadership.

pointments of young leaders.<sup>11</sup> Moreover, a widespread cadre exchange occurred in 1985 (as noted above), along with a basic restructuring of the military regions, reducing the total from 11 to 7.

Despite the weakening of regional military commands as actors in the political system suggested by such phenomena, however, the frequency of leadership changes at the MR command level nevertheless suggests that Beijing continues to fear the emergence of some form of military regionalism. This seems understandable, considering both the continued existence of a fused party-army leadership structure at the top of the politico-military system, and the overall low level of lateral mobility among officers of the regional PLA, as discussed above. Such a concern was at least partly confirmed by the most recent reshuffle of regional commanders and commissars, occurring during the overall personnel reshuffles of spring-summer 1990.

On the surface, these changes seemed to involve a continued application of criteria for officer selection established earlier in the reform period, summed up in the four goals of "rejuvenation, professionalization, revolutionization, and intellectualization" of the PLA. For example, the majority of the shifts involved apparently routine retirements and promotions of younger generals to more senior posts. Most of those removed were in their late sixties while those promoted or remaining in power were in their fifties or early sixties. Actually, most of the top military region "reshuffles" of 1990 consisted of promotions from within the same region, while only two involved lateral exchanges across regional commands (Fu Quanyou and Zhang Wannian). Eight commanders and commissars were replaced, in almost every case by generals who had been promoted into the highest levels of the regional command during the height of the reforms, in the mid-eighties. In other words, with few exceptions, the promotion to regional leadership seemed to mark the logical consequence of a steady process of advancement up the career ladder for commanders and commissars alike.<sup>12</sup> Furthermore, participation in Tiananmen (i.e., an indication of "revolutionization") was particularly notable among those selected, with at least four promotions apparently linked to martial law service (Gu Hui, Shi Yuxiao, Zhang Gong, and Zhu Dunfa). Finally, at present, nine out of fourteen regional heads are either alternate or full party central committee members, eight out of fourteen are graduates of military academies, and all except one (Zhang Gong) has combat experience.<sup>13</sup>

While thus complying, in its general outlines, with the above standard criteria for advancement established during the reforms, considerable evidence also suggests that political motives, including factional calculations, played a very important role in the overall reshuffles of 1990. Although the decision to carry out widespread changes in PLA leadership

<sup>11</sup> Lee, 1989, pp. 238-239.

<sup>12</sup> The majority of MR heads in 1990 became GA commanders and commissars in 1983 and MR deputies in 1985. Moreover, five became party central committee members in 1987, strongly suggesting that they had indeed been selected as rising stars.

<sup>13</sup> Four of the seven regional commanders graduated from the PLA Military Academy in either 1960 or 1961: Fu Quanyou in 1960 and Zhu Dunfa, Zhang Wannian, and Gu Hui in 1961. Wang Chengbin is a 1981 graduate. Three regional political commissars have academy training: Zhang Zhongxian, Cao Pengsheng, and Shi Yuxiao all graduated from the PLA Political Academy, in 1963, 1979, and 1980, respectively. Although not an academy graduate, Liu Jingsong attended an infantry school in the early fifties and participated in a two-month advanced course at the NDU in 1989. These calculations of academy training and party central committee membership take account of the replacement of former Chengdu MR Commander Zhang Taiheng by Li Jiulong in October 1991.

personnel was apparently taken by the CMC in April 1990, after prior informal consultations between Deng and other top leaders, actual implementation occurred only after considerable delay and in a very gradual manner over several months.<sup>14</sup> In many cases a conscious effort was made to balance insiders with outsiders within regional commands. Equally important, the shifts were not publicly announced until many weeks after they had commenced. The process was inaugurated at the regional level by Yang Baibing during personal visits to each region (with the apparent exception of the Nanjing MR), rather than, as in the past, from Beijing by the chairman of the CMC. Personnel changes were carried out sequentially, from the top down, to at least the regimental level. These actions suggest that the reshufflings were controversial, perhaps provoking prolonged disagreement and even resistance both in Beijing and in the provinces. The rather secretive and gradual process of implementation also may indicate Beijing's fear that the changes would be taken as a wholesale purge of commanders and hence evidence of severe PLA instability, or, conversely, as a general reflection of the relative weakness of the central leadership vis-à-vis the military.

Another important difference is that the military shifts were more extensive than past similar reshuffles, with the exception of the 1985 cadre exchange.<sup>15</sup> Almost all regional commanders and political commissars were either rotated or retired after serving an average of only three to five years. Within the military regions, over half of the personnel at the level of deputy commander and above were changed, with major turnovers occurring in the political commissar system in particular. Of those regional leaders *not* affected by the reshuffle, only a very small proportion have held their posts since as early as 1985. The majority were appointed in 1988, with a very few in 1986 and 1987. At the military district level, over half the commanders and political commissars were shifted. All commanders and commissars in the Beijing, Tianjin, and Shanghai Garrison commands were changed, while a large number of leaders within the group armies were also shifted or removed.<sup>16</sup> Changes were also reportedly very extensive at the divisional and regimental levels. Moreover, as noted in Chapter 5, the entire leadership of the PAP General Headquarters in Beijing down to the deputy chief of staff level was replaced, mainly by PLA officers from units within the Beijing MR. Although local PAP unit leaders outside the capital were not extensively reshuffled, many provincial and municipal heads of public security organs responsible for local PAP units were replaced. The extent of overall change, as well as the timing of the reshuffle (soon after Tiananmen and only a few years after the previous reshuffle), certainly suggest that Beijing was at the very least trying to play it safe and shake up the leadership of most local PLA structures so as to prevent the possible reemergence of personal power bases within the PLA.

Beyond these considerations, some of the 1990 leadership removals were apparently made to punish individuals for their performance during Tiananmen. The leadership of the Beijing MR (i.e., former Commander Zhou Yibin and Commissar Liu Zhenhua) was probably re-

<sup>14</sup>*Wide Angle*, No. 212, May 16, 1990, pp. 6-9, translated in *FBIS-CHI*, May 24, 1990, pp. 34-37.

<sup>15</sup>One Hong Kong source characterizes the 1990 reshuffles as "unprecedentedly wide." See *Tangtai*, No. 5, August 15, 1991, pp. 13-15, in *FBIS-CHI*, August 23, 1991, pp. 30-32. At least one former PLA officer insisted to the author that the 1985 exchanges were much larger, however.

<sup>16</sup>At least 34 of the 50 commanders and political commissars of China's 24 group armies and the 15th Airborne Army were replaced between mid-1989 and early 1991. In 27 of 28 cases where information is available on previous postings, the new leading officer was promoted from within the group army, or either promoted or laterally transferred from a nearby group army within the same military region. Only the commander of the 23rd GA of the Shenyang MR was brought in from another region. He had been commander of the 67th GA of the Jinan MR.

moved because of the hesitation it displayed during the Tiananmen crackdown. Both Zhou and Liu exhibited the same strong professional credentials as their colleagues, and both had been in office for less than three years. Moreover, there are indications that the removal of much of the leadership of the PLA Navy came as a result of its general support for Zhao Ziyang and the Tiananmen demonstrators.<sup>17</sup> The intention behind the more extensive shifts occurring among political commissars remains unclear. They probably reflected the leadership's dissatisfaction with the poor state of political education within the PLA. But they might also have been part of an attempt by Yang Baibing to consolidate his position after Tiananmen.

### **LATERAL COMMUNICATION AND CONTACTS AMONG THE REGIONAL PLA**

One of the least known elements influencing military regionalism is the level and significance of horizontal communication among leading officers in Chinese military units. Although we are far from obtaining a clear and accurate picture of this phenomenon, some preliminary observations can be made. Available evidence suggests that officers within a single group army interact relatively frequently across units, while those at higher levels have fewer opportunities. However, the ability of officers to form bonds of trust across units as a result of repeated private interactions is severely circumscribed at all levels of the regional military apparatus.

Direct, formal communication across the chain of command among military leaders is reportedly prohibited under most conditions in the Chinese military. Any such formal horizontal or lateral contact between different units of the command structure normally occurs only via superior organizations in the military hierarchy. That is, different divisions communicate through their common group army headquarters, and different group armies through their common regional headquarters. While leading officers in most military units can easily communicate with one another both vertically and horizontally through a private military telephone system (separate from the closed, "hotline" phone system used by the CMC), such conversations are routinely monitored and sometimes recorded by the GPD Security Bureau. This organization also monitors all other activities of leading PLA personnel, particularly those at the MR and GA levels.

Opportunities exist for informal horizontal contacts to take place among top regional PLA officers, but these are relatively infrequent. In general, officers at the higher levels of the regional command structure have the fewest opportunities for informal, lateral interactions. In recent years, leading regional commanders have been brought together by the GSD for high-level discussions of military issues. These "All-Army" meetings have been held annually for the past several years, in either December or January. Leading regional political officers have similar meetings (termed political work conferences), convened by the GPD to discuss political affairs in the PLA, also on an annual basis. Both types of meetings sometimes include leading officers at the group army level, as well as top members of all three central departments, who will often make speeches to the assembled military heads. The heads of military regions also get together, along with leading officers at the GA level and a wide range of central PLA and CCP officials, during the sporadically convened "enlarged"

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<sup>17</sup>*Kai Fang*, No. 44, August 15, 1990, pp. 7-8, translated in *FBIS-CHI*, August 23, 1990, p. 37.

meetings of the CMC, normally held only in response to a specific need determined by the central leadership. Regional and group army heads will also get together very infrequently (perhaps once every few years) during interregional maneuvers.

Leading military officers below the regional level usually have more opportunities to interact. Most officers at each level within a military region (platoon to group army) will get together one to three times per year for various purposes (e.g., training or political work). However, such horizontal contact will usually be limited to units within a single command structure; for example, leading group army officers within a single military region, divisional officers within a single group army, or regimental officers within a single division. Approximately two to three times per year, meetings of all party committees at each level within a single group army are held, usually to discuss documents issued by the central departments or the CMC. Similarly, all officers within an entire group army can be brought together to discuss particularly important central directives, or just division and regimental officers can be called to group army headquarters for discussions, after which they will return to their units and convene further meetings at lower levels. Thus, the most frequent horizontal contact among regional military officers occurs within individual group army commands.

Opportunities exist during the above meetings for various officers to hold informal discussions. However, at least one knowledgeable observer who has participated in such discussions insists that they are invariably limited to either purely military topics or specific documents issued by the central authorities. Individuals simply do not trust one another well enough to introduce any politically sensitive topics. Moreover, it is difficult for officers in different units at similar levels to develop a sense of trust over time because (a) they meet too infrequently; and (b) at each meeting, they have relatively few opportunities to get together in smaller private groups (e.g., officers from the same unit sleep together and all participants usually eat together in large dining halls). Moreover, one simply cannot know if an officer from another unit is an informant for the military secret police.

Those officers who have the greatest opportunity to hold private discussions are at the regimental level and below, within a single division (and to a lesser extent, within a group army). As suggested above, these individuals meet the most frequently for training exercises, political discussions, etc. In addition, virtually all such officers have come up together through the same command structure, and many have probably already attended at least junior military schools together. Most are products of the reform period, and many may not be entirely linked to factional networks. (Conversely, leading PLA officers at higher levels in the command structure (i.e., division to military region) will usually be fully immersed in advancing their careers by expanding their factional networks, and will be less willing to jeopardize their success by raising sensitive topics.) It is not surprising, therefore, that officers at these lower levels are regarded with the greatest suspicion by the central authorities, and provide the largest number of supporters of "anti-party groups" within the PLA. Yet even among these lower officers, lateral contact is very narrow in scope and the incentives to engage in unsanctioned, private activities or discussions are very weak.

Finally, cadre exchanges and reshuffles also provide opportunities for officers to communicate laterally. Both apparently serve to facilitate the dissemination of views and ideas (particularly at the lower levels) by shifting officers to new units on a long-term basis. However, the net impact of such actions in facilitating horizontal coordination or consultation among military units is probably minimal. Many of those exchanged are placed in unfamiliar

surroundings containing new factional networks, which probably tends to discourage private exchanges, at least initially. Over time, such individuals are probably either eventually coopted into those new networks or retain personal, factional links to individuals within their original units. The former would certainly not facilitate horizontal consultation, while the latter might simply serve to intensify factional competition between leaders of different units.

These findings suggest that few opportunities exist for leading military officers at the military region level and below to develop broad, horizontal contacts that could be utilized in the event of a political crisis in Beijing.

### LOCAL CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS: TWO SEPARATE SYSTEMS

The final component of our assessment of regional military structures relates to the relationship between local civilian and military authorities. The level and character of such relations has at times exerted a decisive influence over the propensity for involvement in elite struggle by PLA units, as indicated by the experience of the GPCR, mentioned in the following chapter.

During the past twenty years, China has experienced a wholesale transformation in the relationship between military and party leaders at the provincial and municipal levels. The closely cooperative, often interlocking party-army leadership structures evident during and immediately after the GPCR have been replaced by two essentially separate sets of leaderships, coexisting within a complex relationship that is cooperative in some areas and very antagonistic in others. The contrast in leadership backgrounds is greatest in those areas most relevant to the formation of regional military-political power centers: China's cities. Municipal government and party leaders are younger, better educated and more pragmatic than in the past, possessing backgrounds in administrative, industrial, and technical fields and are often born and raised in the area where they serve. Military officers serving in all major urban centers as regional, group army, and military district leaders, although better educated, have been brought up through a more professionalized military system less involved with the local civilian leadership, particularly at the military region and group army levels.

The only remaining example of interlocking party-military leadership posts occurs within the administrative organs of the provincial military districts and local urban and rural governments. By regulation, the secretary of the provincial party committee usually holds a concurrent post as first political commissar (FPC) of the military district. Similarly, the local secretaries of various municipal party committees throughout China serve as the FPC of the corresponding PAFD of the municipal government, while the party secretaries at the parallel county (*xian*) or prefectural level serve as the FPC of the military subdistrict (*junfen qu*). This arrangement is intended to ensure stronger party control over local organizations charged with the supervision of China's militia and reserve forces.<sup>18</sup> According to informants, however, the FPC's position at the provincial, subdistrict, and municipal levels is largely pro forma in nature and hence totally different from that of the regular political commissar. While the latter exercises real authority with the local commander, the former is a civilian whose position usually does not confer the party secretary with any real influence

<sup>18</sup>Lee, 1989, p. 104; Godwin, 1988, pp. 65–66.

upon the local military leadership. In fact, the FPC more frequently serves as a channel for the assertion of military authority over provincial, municipal, and county government and party leaders, as when an order is issued to the MDs by the CMC (or, as often occurs, jointly by the CMC and the state council) via the MRs. The only possible exception to this relationship is at the county level, since county government and party officials reportedly took administrative control over the PAFDs during the reform period, thus supposedly enabling FPCs to assert a more active role.<sup>19</sup>

In addition, the economic interests of provincial and local military and nonmilitary leaders in China today are also far from congruent. In most areas, the regular military operates as an independent entity separate from the government. Contrary to the assumptions of some analysts, as a result of the economic reforms, this separation of the military system from the party-state apparatus has led to an increase in competitive (rather than cooperative) economic behavior on the local level. The significant reduction of the PLA's budget during the eighties, in the context of a growing decentralization of economic authority and increased emphasis on market-based activities, prompted many local military commands to engage in a variety of ventures (many illegal) to support themselves. As a result, economic frictions between local military and nonmilitary leaders multiplied, centering on various types of ongoing jurisdictional disputes over land, natural resources, tax revenues, and industrial enterprises. These were aggravated by the heavy burden placed on localities as a result of the demobilization of one million soldiers during the late eighties and additional tensions arising from an increase in both recruitment and resettlement problems among military personnel since Tiananmen. The latter forced provincial governments to increase allowances and pensions to servicemen and their families.<sup>20</sup>

Local military-government friction over economic issues is particularly acute in China's richer coastal provinces such as Guangdong, Fujian, Zhejiang, and Jiangsu. In many of these areas, military authorities have established independent networks for the illegal importation and sale of goods, in complete disregard of state regulations and local civilian authority. For example, according to one very knowledgeable informant, PLA authorities in Guangdong routinely import goods on their own, entirely bypassing customs authorities and trading corporations. They then transport these goods to military associates inland using the military railway system, where they are sold at an enormous profit. In such instances, the economic power of the local military authorities exists as a function of intra-PLA contacts, not because of a close relationship between local military and civilian elites. Indeed, the two elites are in competition economically and often look down upon one another.<sup>21</sup>

Of course, local military leaders must maintain a certain level of cooperation with their civilian counterparts in order to perform many basic duties. Local governments play a major role in providing logistical support, transportation, and other services to the military, while also taking charge of aspects of militia and reserve training and conscription and the supervision

<sup>19</sup>Lee, 1989, pp. 11, 107–108.

<sup>20</sup>See *Jiefangjun Bao*, June 14, 1990, p. 2, translated in *FBIS-CHI*, June 28, 1990, pp. 35–36; Tai Ming Cheung, "Fish Out of Water," *FEER*, August 18, 1988, pp. 28–31; and "The Army: A New Stage in the Fish-and-Water Relationship," *China News Analysis*, December 1, 1990, pp. 2–3, 5.

<sup>21</sup>This specific pattern of military behavior may not exist in poorer areas, where the stakes are lower and the incentives may be greater for local PLA and government authorities to cooperate in the pursuit of economic gains. Yet the more general instances of economically based frictions probably still occur.



of the local PAP.<sup>22</sup> Particularly since Tiananmen, the PLA has exerted special efforts to appear supportive of local interests in both rural and (especially) urban areas, thus hoping to regain some of its lost prestige as the "people's army."<sup>23</sup> This endeavor has been helped somewhat by the fact that a certain proportion of middle- and high-level state and party cadres at the provincial and local levels are PLA veterans or demobilized soldiers. Many originally served in nearby military units and can thus be expected to enjoy some cordial relations with local PLA authorities. In addition, many family members of local PLA officers work in local government offices. Although the significance of such personal links almost certainly declined under the reforms as larger numbers of more highly educated civilian cadres took up local leadership posts, informants insist that they still constitute an important factor, serving to soften some of the antagonistic aspects of local civil-military relations. Overall, however, there is little doubt that military and nonmilitary elites at the provincial and local levels in China today are far less closely associated than in the past, particularly in those cities that have the greatest bearing on the emergence of regionally based, political-military power centers.

#### CONCLUSIONS AND OBSERVATIONS ON MILITARY REGIONALISM AND THE DILEMMA OF CENTRAL CONTROL

Common geographic origin clearly no longer serves as a basis for intra- or interunit links among officers and soldiers in the Chinese military, as it did during the warlord period of the twenties and thirties. Instead, unit-based affiliations are far more significant, especially below the group army level. However, severe limits exist on the ability of such basic military units to play significant political roles. As elsewhere in the Chinese system, vertically structured factional networks undermine the formation of unitwide loyalties among officers. Equally important, horizontal interaction among unit leaders for political purposes is highly limited by the few opportunities available for establishing bonds of trust across group army and regional boundaries. Most important, however, the possibility for high-level regional PLA leaders to form strong regionally based factions has been virtually eliminated by the centrally controlled process of personnel selection and reshuffling above the regimental level, and the internal structure of political surveillance and control that operates through the activities of the party political work system. The resulting pattern of vertical compartmentalization and high-level leadership diversity among military units is compounded by the virtual absence of significant links between regional and local military leaders and their civilian party and government counterparts. In short, although leading PLA officers above the regimental level often utilize personal ties established within their original group army system in maneuvering at the highest levels of the military apparatus, such ties do not readily translate into a pattern of military regionalism.

Despite such changes, Beijing continues to face a major dilemma in its treatment of the regional PLA. Highly intrusive, "divide and rule" mechanisms cannot be pursued too vigorously (e.g., by emphasizing political education over training, frequently mixing "insiders"

<sup>22</sup>There may be much less need for the PLA to cooperate over such issues with local authorities in sensitive border areas such as Xinjiang, Xizang (Tibet), Yunnan, Heilongjiang, and Nei Menggu (Inner Mongolia), where the military reportedly plays a more dominant role in local administration.

<sup>23</sup>A primary example of this occurred during the serious floods in Eastern China during 1991, when the PLA played a major role in relief and reconstruction work.

with "outsiders," or rigidly prohibiting all horizontal interactions), because of the danger they pose to the long-term operational capabilities of a military region and its subordinate units. The effectiveness of an essentially infantry-based, poorly educated peasant army demands that individual units up to at least the regimental level maintain a high level of internal stability in staffing, with officers and soldiers establishing close relations of mutual trust and confidence through long-term affiliation. It also demands that political controls not undermine or negate ongoing attempts to modernize and professionalize military units. In addition, the PLA's ability to respond successfully to future internal crises logically requires a certain level of lateral coordination across units and military regions, rather than strict vertical compartmentalization.

The political insecurities created by the Tiananmen crisis, combined with the continued emphasis on improving the PLA's combat capabilities, have served to exacerbate this contradiction between the requirements of central control and unit capability within the regional military. Deng Xiaoping and his supporters apparently seek to soften the contradiction by accelerating the promotion of younger, better educated, and more highly trained officers into the higher ranks (presumably in order to weaken the influence of deeply entrenched, seniority-based factions), while at the same time strengthening political surveillance and control measures at all levels. Yet such actions cannot ensure military capabilities while entirely eliminating the potential for independent political behavior on the part of individual units or groups of units in a crisis, or, more likely, their use as pawns in political struggles among high-level leadership factions with strong regional military connections. As we have seen, the highly personalized, informal systems of command and control and party supervision over the regional PLA clearly lend themselves to manipulation and abuse by individual factions, as does the system of personnel promotion and reshuffle.<sup>24</sup> Moreover, the enhancement of political control measures most likely will increase the obstacles to lateral communication existing within the regional military, thus decreasing the ability of the system to respond effectively in the future if the regime is confronted, for example, by a combination of massive popular demonstrations and a future leadership crisis.

According to some knowledgeable Chinese and foreign observers, it is conceivable that such concerns could eventually lead to the elimination of the entire regional command structure in the future, as a means of forcing regional factional leaders into retirement and strengthening direct, central control over individual group armies. Although the utility of China's military regions as mechanisms for coordinating interprovincial defense against foreign invasion has arguably diminished as a result of the collapse of the former Soviet Union, the political and practical obstacles to such a radical reconfiguration of China's huge military bureaucracy remain considerable.

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<sup>24</sup>Indeed, personnel intermingling and personalized control structures can serve to increase the influence of dominant leadership factions at the center, which seek to distribute their supporters as widely as possible, rather than to strengthen Beijing's overall control at the expense of the regions.



## **PART FOUR**

### **MILITARY ATTITUDES TOWARD POLITICAL INTERVENTION AND PARTY CONTROL**



## **MILITARY ATTITUDES TOWARD POLITICAL INTERVENTION AND PARTY CONTROL**

An understanding of the possible leadership factions and organizational features of China's politico-military system provides only a partial basis for assessing the possible future involvement of the PLA in a succession struggle: We must also assay the attitudes and beliefs toward military intervention and party control existing within the PLA. Unfortunately, this component of Chinese military behavior, although arguably most important, remains shrouded in secrecy and distorted by official propaganda. Only its broad outlines are perceptible to the outside observer. Indeed, information on the most important element of this puzzle, the outlook and beliefs of those middle-ranking officers of the PLA in command of combat units in China's military regions, is the least available.

Nevertheless, an analysis of past instances of military involvement in leadership struggles, as well as the more general process of military reform, provides a basis for determining the general outlines of military attitudes toward the current party leadership and PLA involvement in an elite struggle. This part of the Report examines the legacy of military intervention during both the GPCR and Tiananmen, and the effect of long-term changes in the socialization of military elites, particularly the evolution of PLA leadership attitudes during the eighties.

In our view, intense confusion and much resentment, anger, and suspicion exist within the ranks of the PLA officer corps over the legitimacy of continued communist party rule, the reemphasis on politicization in military policy, and the leadership's demand for the PLA to play a greater role in handling future domestic social and political unrest. In general, such criticism and resentment is concentrated among younger PLA officers, and is sometimes combined with support for progressive beliefs such as the concept of a National Army free from party control. Balancing these potentially disruptive beliefs and attitudes are forces for stability deriving from the military's traditional fear of chaos and the heightened awareness of the PLA's importance as the final guarantor of social order. These views are held by a wide range of officers at all levels of the military hierarchy, although they are especially concentrated among the most powerful PLA leaders. Between these two extremes lies a very large middle ground of patriotic officers. This "silent majority" is strongly committed to continued military and economic modernization, uncertain about the future of one-party rule, perhaps critical of Tiananmen, and to varying degrees supportive of renewed ties with the West.

## 8. THE GENERAL LEGACY OF MILITARY INVOLVEMENT IN LEADERSHIP STRUGGLES

The history of China's party-army structure, the intertwining of party-military elites at the top of the leadership, and hence the strong overlapping of civil and military interests have produced a highly distinctive pattern of power relationships within the PLA. The military is not an autonomous actor in the political system, as in many Third World countries. On the one hand, as party members, all PLA officers are bound to observe the constraints presented by the party organization and ideology of the communist regime, which define the general rules and limits of political conflict. On the other hand, they also enjoy a privileged political status and "access" to the political arena essentially denied to their erstwhile counterparts in the former Soviet Union.

Significant changes in the structure and behavior of the party-army elite occurred after the early fifties, as a result of the inevitable process of political maturation. As the PLA became more professionalized and many revolutionary leaders gave up their military titles to become "professional" party and state *apparatchiki*, high-level military officers reduced their direct, active involvement in the system as top political decisionmakers. This development led to the emergence of "civilianized" party cadres possessing powerful influence over many policy areas, as heads of party security and propaganda departments and central committee offices. Yet ultimate power in this evolving system still depended upon the maintenance of close relations with the "mainstream" military elites. In other words, military force still served as the ultimate arbiter of power relations in the overall politico-military system, and the relationship between civil and military elites remained highly interdependent, although perhaps not as completely "fused" as in the past.

It is not surprising that this structure of rule inevitably gave rise to repeated military involvement in Chinese elite politics. However, unlike the military of the noncommunist developing world, which would often act as an autonomous or quasi-autonomous institution to realign or overthrow civilian governments in the name of progressive reform, or to guard against social disorder,<sup>1</sup> the PLA has never intervened in leadership conflict as an institution, in a Bonapartist manner. Individual leaders of the PLA were usually drawn into factional politics as high-level members of the party-army elite, sometimes expressing very different views from one another (e.g., compare the political radicalism of Lin Biao with the moderate, professional outlook of Senior General Luo Ruiqing).<sup>2</sup> Moreover, in the most seri-

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<sup>1</sup>For the definitive analysis of the dynamics of military intervention in the Third World, see Samuel P. Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976, Chapter 4. Also see his earlier work, *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations*, Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1957.

<sup>2</sup>For a useful summary of the contrast between military intervention in China and within the *praetorian* societies of the noncommunist Third World, see Shambaugh, 1991, pp. 532-533. Shambaugh concludes that "Huntington's professional/political dichotomy thus proves to be a false one in the Chinese case as the CCP and PLA are intertwined and have sustained each other's power for more than 60 years." This may be too harsh a verdict, however, as certain features of past PLA involvement in Chinese leadership politics parallel Huntington's analysis of "palace revolutions" in *praetorian oligarchies*, where politics is largely a struggle among personal and family cliques (see Huntington, 1976, pp. 197-201). Moreover, aspects of Huntington's analysis of military behavior in systems with expanding levels of political participation and a professionalizing army may be applicable to China's current situation, as we shall see in the concluding chapter.

ous cases of PLA involvement, the ultimate intent of dominant military groups was to support the majority in the party favoring the restoration or maintenance of order against the disruptive influence of radical elements. This was particularly true when actual combat units became involved in leadership conflict, as during the GPCR (below).

This pattern of military involvement in leadership disputes can be seen in other communist countries.<sup>3</sup> In the Chinese case, however, such interventions have occurred much more frequently than in other communist countries, and have usually produced more serious consequences for the political system. Indeed, they have inevitably produced serious divisions within the PLA leadership, along with the prolonged involvement of individual military leaders in factional struggle within the upper echelons of the party. We saw this in the GPCR in the late sixties and early seventies and currently view it in the post-Tiananmen military.

### THE IMPACT OF THE GPCR PERIOD

The overall pattern of PLA involvement during the early stages of its intervention in the GPCR was by no means uniform, as various military units became deeply embroiled in factional disputes among Red Guard groups and between local party authorities, Red Guard and worker groups and the contending leadership factions in Beijing. Given such confusion, compounded by contradictory orders issued by Mao Zedong, the military at times showed signs of hesitancy and passivity and even outright disobedience. There was little if any evidence of independent, coordinated behavior by the PLA. Those actual instances of planned, deliberate action occurred largely as a result of collusion between local party and military leaders determined to resist the onslaught of various stripes of Leftists.<sup>4</sup>

Ultimately, most PLA units throughout the country opted for the forcible suppression of radicalism, and the military subsequently proceeded to occupy a dominant position within the organs of rule. In no sense, however, were such actions either a military coup or a unified response to the coordinated aims of the PLA leadership. A directive issued to the military by Mao Zedong in 1967 to "support the Left" provided a justification for the bulk of the PLA to act, in a largely ad hoc fashion, in accordance with its most basic common denominator, i.e., the preservation of order. Although PLA main force units were usually placed in charge of directing local PLA units to carry out Beijing's orders to form revolutionary committees supportive of the aims of the GPCR, in most cases the two levels of PLA units collaborated to establish revolutionary committees that excluded Leftists as local leaders. Such actions without doubt exceeded the intentions of Mao and his associates. Yet at no time during that process did the PLA as an institution openly defy the authority of Mao or the party.

<sup>3</sup>The general literature on civil-military relations in communist systems observes that in crises involving political issues outside the normal range of military interests, groups within the military tend to ally with specific groups within the party apparatus, rather than confront the party as an institution. Usually, a dominant group within the civilian party leadership is able to link up with individual military leaders who command the allegiance of the military, or a major part thereof. In other words, the military in communist systems is commonly used as a partisan political weapon in leadership struggles. See, for example, Perlmutter and LeoGrande, 1982, pp. 778-789. Also see Dale R. Herspring and Ivan Volgyes, eds., *Civil-Military Relations in Communist Systems*, Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1978; Amos Perlmutter, *The Military and Politics in Modern Times*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977; and Zoltan D. Barany, "Civil-Military Relations in Communist Systems: Western Models Revisited," *Journal of Political and Military Sociology*, Vol. 19 (Summer), 1991, pp. 75-99.

<sup>4</sup>Ellis Joffe, "Civil-Military Relations," in Gerald Segal and William T. Tow, eds., *Chinese Defence Policy*, Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1984, pp. 18-35.



In addition to the clearly crucial role of Mao as the most senior revolutionary leader, three other factors greatly influenced the pattern of PLA intervention during the GPCR. First, the party apparatus as a national institution with authoritative control over the policy process was essentially paralyzed in the face of a violent mass movement initiated by Mao. This left the PLA as the only viable institution capable of maintaining a semblance of order. Second, and more important, local party and state leaders enjoyed close personal relations and strong mutual interests with local PLA leaders in protecting the status quo and avoiding total chaos. Third, the alternative of extreme radicalism associated with "illegitimate" leaders such as Jiang Qing was unacceptable to the vast majority of the military. Because of these factors, moderate or conservative beliefs and attitudes within the PLA opposed to radical social mobilization were able to overcome most internal PLA divisions, providing a basis for the semblance of coherent, albeit diffuse, PLA involvement in elite politics in support of moderate, pro-stability, senior party colleagues.

The continued involvement of the military in the party leadership structure during the late sixties and early and mid-seventies was due largely to the opposition of the vast majority of professional officers to GPCR social radicalism and the machinations of Lin Biao and Jiang Qing. However, this did not suggest a military "plot" to maintain a conservative military regime. Indeed, groups of PLA leaders were arrayed against one another, with the main lines of division placing Lin Piao, his Fourth Field Army colleagues, and a scattered coterie of supporters within local PLA organs against a dominant, albeit disorganized, group of moderate professional commanders with links to Zhou Enlai. Thus, as Ellis Joffe has pointed out, once Lin and the Gang of Four were finally removed from power (through the involvement of senior PLA leaders such as Ye Jianying), the rationale behind the continued military dominance of party and state organs was largely eliminated and it became considerably easier to reestablish civilian control, although many Leftists in the military continued to hold onto political power until the late seventies and early eighties.

Although difficult to confirm, it is very likely that most military leaders concluded from the experience of the entire GPCR period (1966–76) that military involvement in such divisive social and political conflict presented few if any benefits for the PLA. Although PLA intervention was necessary to restore order, it also led to intense factionalism, abuse of power, corruption, and enhanced radicalism, all undermining the prestige and unity of the PLA.<sup>5</sup> The essential question, however, was whether such views significantly weakened the propensity of the system to draw the PLA into leadership conflict. The subsequent evolution of party-army relations in China initially suggested that the answer might be yes.

#### **THE REFORM PERIOD: HEIGHTENED PROFESSIONALISM AND THE PRELUDE TO TIANANMEN**

During the eighties, Deng Xiaoping relied on changing post-GPCR military attitudes toward political involvement to carry out a range of reform measures designed to drastically reduce the direct influence of the PLA on policy questions not related to national defense. First, much of the ideological grounds for future military intervention in politics was eliminated by unequivocally refuting the Cultural Revolution slogan of "three supports and two militaries"

<sup>5</sup>Joffe, 1987, p. 155; and Latham and Allen, 1991, p. 31.

that had justified PLA involvement during that crisis. Second, the former practice of interlocking directorates (in which leading party, state, and military posts in many areas of the country were held by the same individual) ended. Third, a major reduction occurred in the level of military representation within high-level party bodies (e.g., from 11 of 27 politburo members in 1983 to 4 members (aside from Deng) in the 22-member politburo of 1986).<sup>6</sup>

There were also attempts to separate purely military functions such as combat operations, strategy and tactics, and overall military administration from political and ideological issues. This was reflected in both the establishment of a parallel government CMC under the State Council and an increase in the authority given to unit commanders in specific areas. At the same time, the command capabilities of political commissars were increased, with many coming from the ranks of professionally trained regular soldiers. Moreover, a greater stress was placed on military skills and education and a lesser emphasis on political criteria in evaluating officers and soldiers. Political education classes were increasingly aimed at morale boosting and the strengthening of military discipline and patriotism, while also providing explanations of the leadership's rationale for military modernization. They were no longer viewed primarily as a means for assuring military allegiance to and participation in specific revolutionary goals and activities.<sup>7</sup> Greater attention was also given to the modernization of military equipment and systems and less to the "human factor" in warfare, long the foundation of Mao Zedong's outdated notion of People's War. The reforms also aimed at the rejuvenation of the PLA by easing out older officers and promoting younger ones to greater positions of authority, both at the center and in the regions.<sup>8</sup> Officer morale was also raised through the reintroduction of military ranks. In line with such developments, the PLA began significant interactions with the West, leading to technology transfer, manufacturing joint ventures, officer exchanges, and other activities designed to accelerate the military modernization effort.

<sup>6</sup>At the 8th Party Congress in 1956, the percentage of PLA cadres serving as members of the politburo, central committee, and as first secretaries of provincial party committees was 35 percent, 35.2 percent, and 21.4 percent, respectively. At the 9th Congress in 1969, the levels had increased dramatically to 52 percent, 45 percent, and 60 percent. A high point of 72.4 percent among provincial first secretaries was reached in 1970. At the 10th Congress of 1973, the levels dropped significantly to 40 percent, 24 percent, and 48.6 percent. The 11th Congress of 1977 showed further important variations of 57 percent (the highpoint of politburo representation), 29.5 percent, and 12 percent (a very rapid dropoff), reflecting the influence of military conservatives at the center in ousting the Gang of Four after Mao's death in 1976 and accelerated efforts to reduce PLA political representation in the provinces since the elimination of Lin Biao. At the 12th Congress of 1982, levels were 43 percent, 21.5 percent, and 3.4 percent, respectively, while at the important September 1985 Conference of Party Delegates, they dropped further to 18 percent, 14.9 percent, and 0 percent, reflecting the influence of Deng's increased power and the infirmity of some leaders. Finally, at the 13th Congress in 1987, military representation was 11.1 percent, 18.6 percent, and 0 percent. See Keith Crane and K. C. Yeh, *Economic Reform and the Military in Poland, Hungary, and China*, RAND, R-3961-PCT, 1991, p. 21. For further details, see Monte R. Bullard and Edward C. O'Dowd, "Defining the Role of the PLA in the Post-Mao Era," *Asian Survey*, Vol. 26, June 1986, pp. 706-720. For a chart showing the percentage of PLA membership on the central committee and politburo, see Shambaugh, 1991, p. 534.

<sup>7</sup>For example, Latham and Allen, 1991, p. 45, state that PLA Air Force officers told them one of the main goals of the commissar system was to instill a strong sense of patriotism in the PLA. Also see Cheung, "Marching on Stomachs," pp. 30-31. He indicates that while the major duties of political cadres had become more like administrative and personnel staff in Western armed forces, many commissars still held traditional views of their roles.

<sup>8</sup>These latter efforts had produced notable results by the end of the eighties. The average age of MR-level cadres declined from 65.3 in 1982 to 57.1 in 1986. At the group army level, it declined from 56.8 to 49.6, at the division level from 48.3 to 43.5, and at the regimental level from 39.1 to 37.2. See Yu Yulin, "The PLA's Political Role After the CCP's Thirteenth National Congress: Continuity and Change," *Issues and Studies*, Vol. 24, No. 9, September 1988, p. 28. Michael Byrnes states that by the mid-eighties, the average age of brigade, division, and GA commanders (38, 45, and 51) was equal to or less than their counterparts in Western armies. See Byrnes, 1990, p. 134. Also see Lee, 1989, pp. 235-237, who describes the rejuvenation of leading cadres in the PLA General Departments, beginning in 1985.

Finally, the military was persuaded (albeit grudgingly and with considerable resistance) to accept a significant reduction in its budget, as part of an overall development strategy that stressed the prior strengthening of the civilian economy as the foundation for an eventual smaller, better equipped, more efficient, and more flexible military. To facilitate this transformation, the size of the PLA was reduced by approximately one million soldiers, leaving a force of approximately 3.2 million personnel.<sup>9</sup> In addition, military departments were encouraged to engage in various types of entrepreneurial activities (including the foreign sale of arms) to partially counterbalance budget losses.

As a result of such reform measures, the Chinese military by the late eighties had *begun* to take on some of the characteristics familiar to professional military forces in the West, including the development of specialized knowledge, a sense of mission separate from the party, a resistance to involvement in domestic political affairs, and an internal code of conduct.<sup>10</sup> However, such developments did not alter the continued validity of the principle of party leadership and control over the PLA, nor the fact that political authority, in turn, continued to rely ultimately upon military force. Although PLA leaders had for the most part withdrawn from formal party posts, the power structure at the top of the Chinese system still consisted of a fused party-army elite directed by the original revolutionary leaders, while personal factions continued to provide the foundation for authority relations within the party and the military. Hence, in a very fundamental sense, the PLA was not taken out of politics under the reforms. Nor were its interests unified around a common set of objectives distinct from those found in the party. Overall, military reform created considerable confusion within the PLA concerning the proper relationship between politics and professionalism in defining the future role and mission of the military.<sup>11</sup>

## THE TIANANMEN CRISIS AND AFTER

Such confusion over the PLA's "soul" was greatly exacerbated by the political crisis of April–June 1989. Although Tiananmen involved a much more limited pattern of military involvement in politics, in a very different political environment, its impact on military perceptions and unity was enormous. The use of the PLA to forcibly resolve a confrontation between conservative leaders and large segments of urban society reintroduced the military into Chinese politics in a major way.<sup>12</sup> To varying degrees, Tiananmen destabilized the military's rela-

<sup>9</sup>For a general description of the scope and content of the military reforms, see Joffe, 1987, especially Chapter 6. Also see Lee, 1989, pp. 252–257; and Harry Harding, *China's Second Revolution: Reform After Mao*, Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1987, pp. 215–218. More recently, there have been reports that the Chinese leadership intends to reduce the size of the PLA further, perhaps by as many as 300,000–400,000. See Cheung, "Fit to Fight," p. 24.

<sup>10</sup>These characteristics are cited in Latham and Allen, 1991, p. 31, as part of the definition of military professionalism found in the works of Samuel Huntington, Bengt Abrahamsson, and others.

<sup>11</sup>Some analysts of the Chinese military deny this, and insist that the reforms essentially transformed attitudes toward party control in most of the military, creating a Western-style outlook that opposes political and ideological interference and PLA involvement in domestic issues.

<sup>12</sup>Here it is important to note that increased political involvement has not involved increases in PLA representation on leading party and state organs since Tiananmen. Such a development, so notable during the Cultural Revolution, has not occurred. Although it may be true that the informal political influence of senior military leaders as a whole has grown since Tiananmen as a result of the PLA's increased importance as protector of the regime, there is no clear indication that these leaders have decisively strengthened their position of power within the top elite as a separate and distinct "military faction." Divisions among military leaders and their relationship to different party factions remain far more important.

tions with society and the party, its internal unity, its policy direction, its operational mission, and its overall modernization program. In some of these areas, it has exacerbated longstanding tensions and problems. In other areas, it has created new ones.

The Tiananmen crackdown identified the PLA with an unpopular act of bloody repression that has severely undermined its social prestige as an institution and most likely raised strong concerns among many officers over the correctness of current military policy in many areas. The incident presented major implications for the internal unity and morale of the military and its obedience to party control in a future political crisis. Despite its display of loyalty to Deng Xiaoping and to the regime, elements of the PLA exhibited considerable hesitation and even some outright resistance to party directives during the spring of 1989. This may have been partly due to confusion concerning the proper lines of operational control over military forces during the crisis. There is no doubt, however, that officers and soldiers alike participated in the pro-democracy demonstrations of the spring, and that some refused to obey orders to use force against Beijing citizens, leading to investigations concerning the behavior of thousands of soldiers, and some courts martial.<sup>13</sup> Of even greater significance, prior to June 3, high-level officers and senior, retired PLA elders questioned the judgment of the top leadership in declaring martial law and expressed their strong concern over the use of the army against civilians.<sup>14</sup>

Such behavior and views were particularly prevalent among PLA members in and around Beijing. Some very knowledgeable observers of the Chinese military insist that Qin Jiwei supported "insubordination" by officers in Beijing and would have also been removed from office if it were not for his very close personal ties to Deng Xiaoping. Military obedience during the Tiananmen crisis was probably assured more because of a common fear of social chaos and the fact that Deng and Yang Shangkun were able to affirm their continued leadership at the top than by a sense of professional discipline or the overall subordination of PLA leaders to any formal characteristics of the command and control apparatus.<sup>15</sup>

The long-term, divisive impact of Tiananmen upon the military is indicated by the efforts of the central leadership since June 1989 to implement policy measures designed to improve relations between the military and society and assure that the PLA remains responsive to party directives. First, there has been a major, ongoing attempt to raise the importance of politics and ideology and strengthen the structure of party control within the PLA, reviving

<sup>13</sup>Yang Baibing, in a speech to the All-Army Political Work Conference in December 1989, reported a total of 110 officers who "breached discipline in a serious way," and 1,400 soldiers who "shed their weapons and ran away." Twenty-one senior PLA officers were subsequently court-martialed for insubordination, including the former commander of the 38th Group Army, Xu Qinxian. See *SCMP*, December 28, 1989, in *FBIS-CHI*, December 28, 1989, pp. 23-24; and *Cheng Ming*, No. 147, January 1, 1990, p. 10, in *FBIS-CHI*, January 2, 1990, pp. 22-23. Also see Harlan Jencks, "Civil-Military Relations in China: Tiananmen and After," *Problems of Communism*, Vol. 41, May-June 1991, p. 14.

<sup>14</sup>Just prior to the announcement of martial law in Beijing on May 20, 150 active and retired senior officers reportedly submitted a letter to the leadership cautioning against the spilling of civilian blood by the PLA. A similar letter was also sent at approximately the same time by seven prominent retired military elders (Ye Fei, Zhang Aiping, Yang Dezhi, Song Shilun (now deceased), Xiao Ke, Chen Zaidao, and Li Jukui). See Harlan Jencks, "The Military in China," *Current History*, September 1990, p. 266; and Tai Ming Cheung, "The PLA and Its Role Between April-June 1989," 1991, p. 9.

<sup>15</sup>Here we take issue with experienced analysts of the PLA such as Ellis Joffe, who believes that the Chinese military "agreed" to intervene in Tiananmen mainly because it is "a disciplined, professional army which takes its orders from the party leadership and does what it is told." See Ellis Joffe, "The Tiananmen Crisis and the Politics of the PLA," in Yang, ed., 1991, p. 27.

practices often employed before the reform period. This has included a raising of the position of commissars within military units and a rebuilding of the party committee system at the lower levels of the PLA, which was allowed to atrophy under the reforms.<sup>16</sup> Efforts in these areas intensified following the abrupt collapse of communist regimes in Eastern Europe in late 1989. The defection of the Rumanian army to the side of the democracy movement in December was particularly alarming to the Chinese leadership. Further impetus was provided by the subsequent failure of the Soviet military to back the abortive conservative coup of August 1991.<sup>17</sup> The Chinese leadership believed this "disaster" occurred in large part because Gorbachev's liberalizing political reforms had undermined party discipline and virtually destroyed regime controls at all levels of the military. An All-Army Political Work Forum held in Guangzhou during September 1991 sought to strike a contrast with civil-military relations in the Soviet Union by extolling the importance of ideological work and the role of the commissar system in the PLA. Yang Baibing played the central role in this highly publicized effort, although instructions to the forum were also provided by Yang Shangkun, Liu Huaqing, and Jiang Zemin.<sup>18</sup>

Second, the CMC, through the GPD, carried out a major reshuffling of the PLA leadership in spring-summer 1990. Although part of a regular pattern of personnel shifts dating back to the seventies, the intent was both to strengthen party control over the PLA, and almost certainly to improve the personal position of Yang Baibing, building upon similar actions taken by Yang Shangkun in 1986–87.<sup>19</sup> Third, the party leadership apparently attempted to soothe feelings in the military by significantly upping the defense budget, despite a continued policy of economic austerity. Finally, hoping to prevent a recurrence of massive social protest, the party leadership also placed renewed emphasis on military involvement in internal police functions. As indicated in earlier chapters, efforts have been made since Tiananmen to overhaul the PAP and transform it into a significantly larger, better-trained and disciplined, well-equipped force, and to establish elite reserve units dedicated to the maintenance of social order. Nevertheless, mainstream combat units were told by top leaders that they could be called upon again to suppress domestic turmoil in an emergency, if necessary.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>16</sup>Political campaigns launched by the leadership since Tiananmen focus on five major themes: discipline in the ranks; ensuring the "absolute control" of the party over the army; combating "peaceful evolution" and "bourgeois liberalization;" improving the quality of grass roots political work in the PLA; and training Lei Feng-style soldiers. This summary and an overview of the implementation of these campaigns are provided in Shambaugh, 1991, pp. 553–567.

<sup>17</sup>Byrnes, 1990, pp. 145–146. In June 1990, the GPD issued a circular that stipulated a system of "on-the-job" theoretical study for military cadres at and above the regimental level, stressing basic Marxist theory as part of a revamped program of yearly political training. See Xinhua, June 25, 1990, in *FBIS-CHI*, July 10, 1990, p. 33. Also see Xinhua, June 20, 1991, in *FBIS-CHI*, June 24, 1991, pp. 54–55; and *Renmin Ribao*, May 1, 1991, p. 3, in *FBIS-CHI*, May 24, 1991, pp. 28–29, which discuss a recent report on the effort to rebuild party branches at the company level and below and renewed attempts to inculcate in basic-level officers and men the notion that "I will do whatever the party tells me to do."

<sup>18</sup>See Xinhua, September 12, 1991, in *FBIS-CHI*, September 13, 1991, pp. 24–25, for a summary of Yang Baibing's speech to the forum. Also see *Jiefangjun Bao*, September 13, 1991, p. 1, in *FBIS-CHI*, October 1, 1991, pp. 32–33; *Nanfang Ribao*, September 13, 1991, p. 1, in *FBIS-CHI*, September 24, 1991, p. 41; and *SCMP*, September 6, 1991, p. 12, in *FBIS-CHI*, September 6, 1991, pp. 42–43.

<sup>19</sup>The meaning of the 1990 reshuffles for military regionalism and factional politics was discussed in Chapter 7. For mention of Yang Shangkun's pre-Tiananmen activities, see Byrnes, 1990, pp. 136–137.

<sup>20</sup>For details on several points mentioned in this paragraph, see Michael D. Swaine, "China Faces the 1990's: A System in Crisis," *Problems of Communism*, May–June 1990, pp. 20–35. Jiang Zemin emphasized the need for the PLA to perform the dual roles of defense and internal security in his Army Day speech of August 1, 1990. See *China*

Rather than solving the PLA's post-Tiananmen problems, however, many of these measures have instead produced further difficulties for the party leadership, both internally and in its relations with the military. Most important, the repoliticization campaign and the involvement of the military in internal security duties have apparently generated significant controversy within the PLA by severely undermining the clear emphasis on professionalism and modernization that had emerged as part of Deng Xiaoping's effort at military reform. Developments since Tiananmen have thrown the validity of this trend and its implications for creating a more professionalized military into doubt. Indeed, the media blitz that sustains the repoliticization effort suggests that many aspects of past military reform were somehow linked to a process of "peaceful evolution" orchestrated by hostile international forces and their domestic supporters. Specifically, this subversive strategy is purportedly intended to split the PLA and undermine socialism through psychological warfare centered on the Western "bourgeois" notion of a neutral, "national" military (*guojia jundui*) free from partisan political control. In the view of some conservatives, such reform-based attitudes may have even contributed to the emergence of the Tiananmen crisis by fostering sympathy for the pro-democracy demonstrators and hesitation within the military to deal harshly with them. From their perspective, the repoliticization effort thus represents a corrective to the corrosive effect of military reforms on the obedience of the PLA to party leadership.<sup>21</sup>

Evidence from both the official PRC media and Hong Kong publications suggests that a significant number of officers in both Beijing and the military regions reject this argument and question the logic of the repoliticization campaign. More important, they also resent the attempt to again embroil the military in domestic security functions and factional politics at the top. Such resentment may have been compounded by the fact that Western sanctions against the Chinese regime imposed immediately following Tiananmen have reduced China's access to advanced military technology, equipment, and training and exchange programs, particularly with the United States. This has compelled the Chinese military to explore less attractive alternatives to reliance on Western defense hardware, including the purchase of advanced weaponry from Russia.<sup>22</sup>

Interviews conducted by the author with current and former PLA members strongly suggest that many officers view the political dynamics of the Tiananmen crisis as *primarily* motivated by the struggle between hardliners and supporters of former General Secretary Zhao Ziyang, rather than as a response by a unified party leadership committed to the suppression

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*News Analysis*, 1990, Hong Kong, p. 8. Also see Wang Chenghan, "Uphold the Party's Absolute Leadership over the Army with Great Firmness," *Jiefangjun Bao*, December 18, 1989, in *FBIS-CHI*, February 15, 1990, p. 38.

<sup>21</sup>For a representative selection of articles on "peaceful evolution," see the three-party series in *Ban Yue Tan*, October 1989, in *FBIS-CHI*, January 5, 1990, pp. 17-21. For particularly notable examples of attacks on the notion of a National Army for China, see Yang Baibing's remarks cited in *Renmin Ribao*, June 24, 1991, p. 5, translated in *FBIS-CHI*, June 26, 1991, p. 37; and *Renmin Ribao*, July 29, 1991, p. 5, in *FBIS-CHI*, August 8, 1991, pp. 14-15.

<sup>22</sup>The extent of PLA resistance to the post-Tiananmen measures taken by the leadership is suggested by the virulence and prolonged nature of the criticism in the official press leveled at a wide range of "bourgeois" ideas found in the military, along with constant references to the need for more energetic efforts at "party building" in the PLA. See an article appearing in the party theoretical journal *Qiushi*, No. 2, January 16, 1991, devoted entirely to attacking the notion of the "depoliticization" of the PLA, translated in *JPRS-CAR*, March 21, 1991, pp. 15-18. Also see the *Renmin Ribao* editorial of April 25, 1991, p. 1, in *FBIS-CHI*, May 9, 1991, pp. 34-35. On other occasions, the post-Tiananmen leadership has repeatedly lamented the lack of sufficient "unity" in the PLA and the need for less "empty talk" about ideology and the principle of party leadership over the military. See, for example, *Renmin Ribao*, July 5, 1990, p. 1, in *FBIS-CHI*, July 20, 1990, p. 28.

of social and political forces threatening nationwide instability.<sup>23</sup> For such observers, many of the above post-June 1989 measures have unquestionably been used by specific leaders such as Yang Baibing as instruments in an escalating struggle to control the PLA and consolidate personal positions of power in preparation for the succession to Deng Xiaoping. This interpretation is also clearly supported by many outside analysts of politics in the Chinese military, especially experienced China watchers in Hong Kong, as indicated in our discussion of Yang Baibing's position in Chapter 4.

However, one should not assume that military opposition to the use of lethal force against civilians, the involvement of the PLA in factional politics, and the various post-Tiananmen trends summarized above amount to either a wholesale rejection of party leadership over the military, or support for wholesale military intervention on the side of major political and economic reform. There is little clear evidence that significant numbers of PLA officers now support unified involvement by the military in China's political struggles. Moreover, even after the terrible events of Tiananmen, most military officers still seem to equate future reform with continued modernization and overall increases in combat effectiveness, not with political liberalization or the creation of a national army. As suggested above, the major thrust of military reform in the eighties was directed at institutional rationalization, enhanced professionalization, and increased specialization of functions.

In order to assess more accurately the significance of post-Tiananmen military outlooks for future patterns of political involvement, it is essential for analysts to gain a more complete and reliable understanding of their likely range, intensity, and location. Here we can present only some general clues, based largely on interviews.

Chinese informants often refer to the existence of three leadership tiers in the Chinese military. The first consists of the elders in the party and military: hardliners committed to continued one-party rule through rigid control of the military, despite some hesitancy regarding the use of the PLA against civilians during Tiananmen. The second tier consists of those military leaders formally holding the highest positions of power in the PLA (i.e., central department directors and deputy directors, regional commanders, commissars, deputy commanders, deputy political commissars, chiefs of staff, and heads of political departments, and group army commanders and commissars): owing their posts to the elders and also outwardly committed to communist party rule, but at the same time engaged in intense political maneuvering. While most members of this tier probably seek merely to maintain or advance their personal positions of power by defending continued party control, a few may be supportive of radical change in China through military action, or wholesale military intervention to maintain social order. The third tier includes PLA officers under the age of 50 in leadership posts below the highest group army level (i.e., middle and lower staff officers in the central departments, group army deputy commanders, commissars, and chiefs of staff, division and regimental commanders and commissars, and battalion and company leaders). In many ways this is the most diverse tier. It includes (a) factional supporters of the top PLA leaders; (b) some opponents of the current PLA leadership and, indeed, the entire structure of party

<sup>23</sup>In line with this approach, some observers insist that the escalation of the confrontation between the Chinese regime and the Tiananmen demonstrators and the eventual use of lethal force were all encouraged by conservatives in order to seal the fate of Zhao Ziyang. He could then be accused of causing a bloody confrontation by allowing bourgeois liberalization to take root, and of allegedly "splitting" the party by subsequently temporizing in the face of the massive demonstrations of April-May 1989.

control; and (c) probably a very large middle ground occupied by patriotic junior officers, including those strongly committed to continued military and economic modernization, uncertain about the continued validity of one-party rule, probably critical of Tiananmen, and to varying degrees supportive of renewed ties with the West.<sup>24</sup>

Given severe data limitations, it is impossible at present to determine the size and relative influence of these different groups among the younger officers, or the specific relationships some of them undoubtedly have with more important senior PLA leaders in the middle tier of leadership (as either supporters or opponents). Observers sometimes suggest that the lower ranks of the Chinese officer corps have been widely infected by liberal ideas as a result of changes occurring in the pattern of officer promotion in the eighties. The reforms had originally aimed at raising the overall educational level of PLA officers by both recruiting larger numbers of university students into the officer corps and expanding the role of revamped, more professionalized military academies in assessing and recommending candidates for promotion and assignment. In 1980, a decision was made to restrict future party membership in the PLA to graduates of such academies.<sup>25</sup> However, military insiders insist that, while a much higher percentage of high-level officers were indeed put through military academies, attempts to recruit students at lower levels of the PLA made little headway. One very knowledgeable informant asserted that the military leadership has strongly resisted any increased recruitment of university students into the officer corps, since they often cannot cope with the hardships of military life in the provinces and also pose the danger of infecting the rank and file with ideas of political reform. Such resistance has increased significantly since Tiananmen.

Some outside analysts have also suggested that the various military "salons" of the reform period served as a forum for the emergence and expansion of anti-party ideas among middle- and low-level field and staff officers (including the above-mentioned notion of a national army), and that these ideas continue to be widely discussed, albeit covertly, in the PLA today.<sup>26</sup> However, others (including a former PLA officer familiar with attitudes in both Beijing and several key military regions) insist that only a small number of intellectuals and advisers associated with military institutes and academies in Beijing have ever discussed such concepts. Moreover, they add that while some of these officers may have participated in

<sup>24</sup>As one former member of the PLA put it to the author:

Many of the more capable younger members of the PLA leadership are very patriotic, desire a strong nation and hence are supportive of economic reform and even some democracy. Most of them went through the experience of the GPCR and were sent down to the villages to work for several years. Because of this, they learned the practical needs and views of the peasantry and workers, but also lost their faith in Marxist ideology. Moreover, unlike the younger student leaders of the pro-democracy movement, most of these younger officers are the children of mid-level cadres and very knowledgeable about leadership politics and the importance of the military in China. And unlike the children of high-level cadres (i.e., the so-called "Princelings Party" or *Taizi Dang*), these leaders are not as corrupted by their family associations, nor by links to the existing regime.

Hence, in this informant's view, such men are well placed to serve as the future leaders of China, assuming they can link up with more senior leaders and attain positions of power.

<sup>25</sup>Alastair I. Johnston, "Changing Party-Army Relations in China, 1979-1984," *Asian Survey*, Vol. 24, October 1984, p. 1032.

<sup>26</sup>Interviews, Hong Kong, August 1991. Chinese official sources give no clear indication of how widespread the notion of a National Army might be inside the PLA. Articles appearing in *Jiefangjun Bao* simply state that "some people" argue for the "depoliticization" of the army and the separation of the PLA from the CCP. See, for example, *Jiefangjun Bao*, November 21, 1989, in *FBIS-CHI*, December 22, 1989, p. 7.



various salons formed in the Beijing area prior to Tiananmen, such forums discussed mainly military topics relating to the evolution of PLA strategy and overall modernization. A small number of salons were also formed by middle and lower field officers in the military regions (most commonly below the group army level, among division, regimental, and battalion officers). But these dealt almost exclusively with concrete, practical issues of military administration and operations. According to these observers, officers in both the military regions and the central departments apparently did not discuss the merits of a national army. Thus, this view suggests that although Tiananmen may have made the issue of party control of the PLA more urgent, incidences of serious political dissent and movement away from the party-army concept among lower-level officers have been highly scattered, unorganized, and relatively ineffectual. Salons in particular did not serve as a means of fomenting such "revolution" in the PLA.<sup>27</sup>

Indications of outright military opposition to the regime among both middle- and lower-level officers are understandably even more rare.<sup>28</sup> Articles appearing in the Hong Kong press frequently characterize the post-Tiananmen PLA as seething with anti-party unrest at the lower levels, with junior officers forming unofficial and often illegal groups based on unit affiliation or academy ties, some dedicated to the promulgation of democratic, anti-party concepts, the creation of a political and economic system similar to that in South Korea today, or even the violent overthrow of the communist regime through a military seizure of power.<sup>29</sup> However, according to one former well-placed military officer, the total number of active anti-party elements identified in classified PLA reports rarely exceeds 2,000 per year. This amount is probably deliberately lowered from an actual number that may be closer to 4,000 to 5,000 per year. Most such opposition occurs below the regimental level (although there apparently has been an increase in such activities at the regimental and divisional levels since Tiananmen) and mostly in more economically advanced areas and near major cities such as Beijing. Both estimates are extremely low, considering the total size of the PLA. And even though there are undoubtedly many more oppositional elements in the military than any published figures suggest, it is difficult to believe that the total could exceed either the number of low-level officers who form the base of factional networks in the PLA or those occupying the amorphous middle ground.

Nevertheless, opposition to Tiananmen and its aftereffects remains strongest among relatively young, mid-level officers and may indeed be relatively widespread, particularly among those serving in central departments and research institutes in Beijing and in other major cities.<sup>30</sup> Promoted to important positions under the reforms and actively involved in the

<sup>27</sup>Such a conclusion, however, must be taken as tentative. The fact that advisers to deposed CCP General Secretary Zhao Ziyang advocated the creation of a National Army as part of the overall reform effort to separate party from army structures suggests that the idea may have enjoyed some widespread support. For mention of the Zhao Ziyang connection with this concept, see Shambaugh, 1991, p. 555.

<sup>28</sup>For the alleged text of a pro-democracy leaflet distributed among low-level military units in the Shenyang MR, see *Cheng Ming*, No. 152, June 1, 1990, p. 14, in *FBIS-CHI*, June 1, 1990, pp. 28-29.

<sup>29</sup>For one notable example, see *Pai Hsing*, No. 236, March 16, 1991, pp. 3-5, in *JPRS-CAR*, June 13, 1991, pp. 98-101, supposedly based on an internal report on PLA unrest among middle- and lower-level officers. Also see *Cheng Ming*, No. 166, August 1, 1991, pp. 14, 15, in *FBIS-CHI*, August 5, 1991, pp. 46-48, citing unrest at the division and GA levels and the prevalence of illegal organizations in the Beijing and Shenyang MRs, the Navy, and the Air Force.

<sup>30</sup>During a speech given to an emergency session of the enlarged CMC on May 24, 1989, Yang Shangkun reportedly questioned the loyalty of younger officers in the PLA, especially those serving in levels below GA

movement to professionalize and modernize the military, these officers have strong career and policy-related reasons to maintain pre-Tiananmen reform trends.<sup>31</sup> Some evidence also suggests that many of these younger officers are especially opposed to Yang Baibing, because of his factional maneuvering, and his strong advocacy of repoliticization.<sup>32</sup> It is also very likely that some middle and lower officers within specific service arms (such as the Navy and the Air Force) are particularly unsympathetic toward current policy. These sectors of the PLA benefited substantially from the military-related contacts, exchanges, and trade carried out between China and the West over the past decade. Younger officers in these areas presumably have a stronger understanding of the need to sustain modernization and may be very skeptical of any attempts at repoliticization.

In contrast to these views, it seems that most high-ranking officers supported the decisions of the leadership in April–June 1989, although many may think that the PLA ultimately overreacted in suppressing the demonstrators.<sup>33</sup> This suggests that a fundamental gap probably exists between the perceptions of many younger, lower- and middle-ranking PLA officers toward Tiananmen, and most members of the senior leadership. However, it remains virtually impossible to assess exactly how deep-rooted and widespread various dissenting views may be among younger officers, and the specific divisions among them.

One key indicator of the extent to which the attitudes and beliefs of middle- and lower-ranking PLA officers are becoming modernized and progressive lies in their relationship to other groups in society. The participation of younger PLA officers in the Tiananmen demonstrations suggests prior interactions with university students and intellectuals, as well as, perhaps, some younger urban workers. Such interactions could serve to radicalize the beliefs of many younger officers in China's cities, and also accelerate the dissemination of such beliefs throughout the regional commands. Yet available evidence suggests that even such relatively progressive urban groups do not constitute coherent, self-conscious, and unified

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commander and those in the Beijing area. See Cheung, "The PLA and Its Role Between April–June 1989," 1991, p. 9. Cheung also states (p. 14) that many of the officers under investigation after Tiananmen are believed to be serving in and around Beijing, including the central departments, the Beijing Garrison Command, and the Beijing MR. Informants in the Chinese military stationed in the Beijing area stated to the author in August 1991 that unrest in the lower ranks of the PLA was relatively widespread, and that the party and military leadership were especially concerned over the loyalty of officers at the division level and below. Interviews with younger officers within the Beijing MR conducted by David Shambaugh in May–June 1991 also confirm this observation. See Shambaugh, 1991, p. 565, footnote 162.

<sup>31</sup>One specific indication of attitudes among younger officers was provided by interviews undertaken before Tiananmen with 20 medium-level officers, all of whom rose to power over the past decade. Most were under 50 years of age and many had visited foreign countries. They expressed strong concern over the decline of the PLA's combat effectiveness, sharply criticized the obstacle to modernization posed by older military leaders unappreciative of science and technology, and strongly opposed any continued interference in military affairs by the elder leadership. These interviews took place sometime before May 1989, but first appeared after June 4 in a mainland magazine entitled *New China Digest* (*Xinhua Wenzai*). They were summarized in *Ming Pao*, March 6, 1990. The interviewees included group army commanders, commissars of provincial military districts, deputy commanders of major military regions, deputy commanders of naval vessels, and presidents of various military academics. See *FBIS-CHI*, March 6, 1990, pp. 30–31. Also see Wilson and You, 1990, pp. 38–44, who suggest that younger military officers supportive of continued reform constitute a significant body that could become dominant within the military once the senior leadership passes away. A similar argument is made by Jencks, 1991.

<sup>32</sup>See *Tangtai*, October 20, 1990, in *FBIS-CHI*, October 25, 1990, pp. 30–32, for a discussion of the attitudes of younger officers toward Yang Baibing.

<sup>33</sup>For example, Chi Haotian stated that senior generals and PLA cadres at the GA level and above maintained unanimity in ideology, organization, and action during the Tiananmen crisis. See Cheung, "The PLA and Its Role Between April–June 1989," 1991, p. 11. However, one very knowledgeable informant in Beijing stated to the author that he knew for a fact that many general-ranking officers believed the military acted excessively during June 3–5, 1989.

social forces in China. They are still highly limited in their scope and appeal, fragmented and diverse in both their structure and outlook, and weakened by the common expression of highly individualistic values and attitudes by their members. They are also kept in check by the authorities.<sup>34</sup>

Such diversity of outlook also exists among reform-minded military officers, including those occupying the middle ground mentioned above. A basic split may exist between those individuals committed to the maintenance of order in China as a first priority and precondition for continued reform, and those recognizing the need for fundamental economic and even political change as a prerequisite to the establishment of any period of enduring stability and development, even though such change is very likely to produce significant unrest. Despite misgivings about Tiananmen and its aftermath, officers in the former group may believe that some form of continued one-party rule is essential for China, and thus could decide to back repression in the future. Indeed, senior conservative leaders at the top of the system could use appeals to order as a means of forging alliances with such groups, while their less conservative opponents might seek to strengthen their position through appeals to those factions within the officer corps more supportive of significant change. Elite references to Tiananmen could serve as the central symbol for factional overtures to the PLA, given the relationship of that event to all the major issues dividing the military. Yet such manipulation of military views could ultimately unleash enormous pressures from below that could bring into play more fully the destabilizing organizational features of the overall politico-military system, thus causing disruptive military intervention.

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<sup>34</sup>For a particularly insightful and informative analysis of nascent labor groups, see Andrew G. Walder, "Workers, Managers, and the State: The Reform Era and the Political Crisis of 1989," *The China Quarterly*, No. 127, September 1991, pp. 467–492. For a useful discussion of student and intellectual attitudes and the limits of the civil society in China, see Michel Bonnin and Yves Chevrier, "The Intellectual and the State: Social Dynamics of Intellectual Autonomy During the Post-Mao Era," *The China Quarterly*, No. 127, September 1991, pp. 569–593, and Thomas B. Gold, "Youth and the State," *The China Quarterly*, No. 127, September 1991, pp. 594–612. For a very perceptive analysis of the problems of individualism and passive participation, see Lucian Pye, "The State and the Individual: An Overview Interpretation," *The China Quarterly*, No. 127, September 1991, pp. 443–466.

## **PART FIVE**

### **SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS**



## **SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS**

This concluding part begins with a summary and analysis of the most salient features and resulting political dynamics of China's politico-military system, drawing upon observations and conclusions presented in our preceding analysis of PLA leadership, organization, and beliefs. This serves as a basis for a subsequent evaluation of the likelihood of four possible scenarios of military involvement in leadership strife: nonintervention, a reformist military coup, conservative intervention, and piecemeal intervention by individual military factions. This is followed by a brief discussion of the likely impact that the timing and order of death of the party and military elders will have upon the probability of each scenario.

As indicated in our introduction, the intent of this exercise is not to predict what the PLA will do in a future leadership crisis in China, but to more clearly delineate the major features of the system most relevant to military involvement in elite politics and gain a better understanding of the specific forces influencing such involvement and the possible range and manner of their interaction.

Part Five ends with a chapter that analyzes the implications of the recent 14th Party Congress for the military's political role in the succession.

## 9. FEATURES OF THE SYSTEM

It is useful to distinguish two types of features basic to China's politico-military system: (1) those more general characteristics relevant to virtually every period since 1949 and to most situations involving the organization and exercise of ultimate authority; and (2) more specific characteristics relating to the existing balance of political forces, organizational relationships, and attitudes and beliefs that have evolved under the current Deng Xiaoping regime. The former features provide the broad context within which the latter operate within the system. Their interaction provides the foundation for certain overall dynamics relevant to military involvement in politics.

### GENERAL FEATURES

1. *Ultimate political authority in China is highly personalized, militarized, and concentrated in the hands of a few individuals.* These system characteristics emerged largely through the interaction of traditional informal patterns of authority relationships centered upon the formation and operation of personal factions, with the communist party-army structure, which thoroughly politicized military force, historically the key arbiter of political power in China. In this system, the communist party functions as the sole vehicle for social mobilization and organization, the delimiter of factional disputes among the leadership, and a control mechanism over military force. The military, on the other hand, serves as the key foundation of supreme political power. Hence, a party leader's ultimate authority relies to a great extent upon the strength and breadth of his personal links to the military, while a military leader's ultimate political influence usually derives from his personal relationships with key party heads.

2. *Supreme power in this system of rule is held by a small number of senior revolutionary veterans with broad experience as both military and party leaders.* The relative political influence of these contending elders derives from their comparative prestige and stature as senior leaders, and the strengths of their positions as patrons of complex, vertically structured factional networks extending down through and often across the party, military, and government bureaucracies. Hence, at this level, formal positions largely reflect informal power and influence within the system. Indeed, many elders hold no formal posts at all, yet continue to exert decisive influence. Although the organizational careers and major factional foundations of these veteran revolutionaries suggest a division between so-called party elders and military elders, they together constitute a coherent, unique tier of powerholders.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>The fundamental importance of such personalized, elder-led factional networks is suggested by many other features of the politico-military system summarized below. Among the most important are: the key role elder leaders have played in influencing the pattern of party-military interaction since 1949; the apparent attempt by senior elder Deng Xiaoping to maintain a balance between three dominant politico-military factions in the general departments of the PLA; the fact that Deng Xiaoping's personal dominance over the system during the reform period has resulted in a pattern of leadership relationships at the regional level that is tilted toward Second FA supporters; the highly personalized nature of the military command and control apparatus; the various features of the personnel structure (periodic reshuffles, exchanges, pattern of promotion, etc.) utilized by Beijing to break up factional networks and thereby maintain the loyalty of combat units to the center; and the attitudes of PLA officers toward issues of political power and civil-military relations, which often place great emphasis upon the existence and interactions of factional networks.

3. *Party and military elites and institutions become increasingly distinct and separate as one moves down the leadership structure.* The most powerful leaders below the elders hold top posts in the formal party, military, and state organs, and are themselves supported by personal factional networks. While doubtless possessing various views and interests more closely reflective of their different formal bureaucratic responsibilities and support networks, the most senior subordinate leaders nevertheless rely heavily upon the strength of their links to specific party and military elders to get ahead in the system. Such links result from the various direct organizational affiliations, policy positions, etc., they share with the elders and the strength of their own factional support networks within their respective bureaucracies, which gives them political influence and thus attracts elder support.

4. *The highly personalized character of authority relationships, combined with the absence of an institutionalized structure of leadership succession, has produced a complex and often unstable pattern of intense political competition at the apex of the Chinese politico-military system.* The system creates strong incentives for a single leader or small group of leaders to establish his dominant authority by maintaining and expanding a strong personal support network throughout both party and military bureaucracies. Since subordinate leaders in the system base their political strategies on their evaluation of the shifting political struggle at the top of the system, they are constantly looking upward for indications of the relative strengths and weaknesses of specific leaders, and to obtain cues from elders in need of support. Within this system, potential political successors largely emerge as the creations of one or several contending elder leaders. Moreover, a successor's ultimate ability to survive the death of his elder patron(s) depends heavily upon the strength and breadth of his contacts among his military counterparts.

5. *This system has produced a highly interactive pattern of party and military politics since 1949, especially concerning basic issues of national policy and ultimate political power.* As a result, individual military leaders and armed units have often been drawn into leadership conflict on a partisan basis, in support of specific mainstream party leaders or groups of such leaders. The PLA has never intervened in leadership politics as an autonomous or quasi-autonomous institution with a distinct and unified purpose. Those few cases of relatively widespread intervention in leadership politics by armed military units (e.g., the GPCR and the Tiananmen crisis) were initiated by elders such as Mao Zedong or Deng Xiaoping, to support partisan interests. Such intervention took on a coordinated, unified appearance largely because of the seriousness of the external threat of social chaos confronting the party-army system as a whole, not because of the internal cohesiveness of the military. In each case, the danger of serious military disunity was always present.<sup>2</sup>

6. *Those factional support networks of greatest significance to a future leadership crisis are concentrated in the military bureaucracy, connecting both party and military elders with younger, powerful central and regional military elites.* The key organizational structure that provides the framework for such personal linkages is the extended PLA field army system. The vast majority of the highest-level central and regional PLA leaders today began their military careers during the late forties, within low-level units of various field armies. They

<sup>2</sup>This was especially the case in the Cultural Revolution. At that time, broad-based military action to restore order occurred mainly because of (a) the total collapse of party authority at all levels of the system; (b) the close collaboration existing between local party and military leaders; and (c) the danger to social order and the personal and professional positions of military leaders presented by the extreme political radicalism of the Maoists.



subsequently advanced up the military ranks after 1949 through continuous service within the same field army corps and military region, although some would serve within more than one military region as their unit was transferred around the country. Such career patterns provided the basis for lasting affiliations with elder leaders (in the case of the most senior officers), professional peers, and a large number of subordinate regional officers. While most top military leaders established strong upward, downward, and lateral factional links as a result, others became "uprooted" cadres when their original units were disbanded. In contrast, those younger officers who entered the PLA after 1949 (e.g., group army commanders and below) possess a narrower base of affiliations, largely concentrated on individual corps and group armies within a single military region. For these officers, upward links are normally limited to individual "patrons" at the regional command level. It must be noted, however, that service in field army structures does not always provide the foundation for factional associations in the PLA. For example, the Fourth FA system is too large and diverse to perform such a function, while many members of the Third FA system apparently support leaders of other FA systems. Moreover, service in civilian party and state organs, "unaffiliated" military regions and corps headquarters, and various PLA departments in Beijing and within the military research and development sector also plays a very important, albeit secondary, role in the establishment of potential factional relationships.

7. *China's system of military command and control and party supervision embodies most of the features found in the politico-military system as a whole: it is highly personalized, centralized along vertical lines, and compartmentalized.* Serving largely as the supreme leader's personal control mechanism over the PLA, the military communication system provides direct access to each tier of the military command, to at least the division level. Orders are issued in a variety of ways, but the emphasis is placed on direct, personal contact. This mechanism of personal command is augmented by an elaborate, penetrating structure of political controls over military units, centered on the party committee system and the internal security apparatus and designed to ensure military compliance to party directives and leadership orders. Overall, this system of military command and control presents major irregularities in procedure and potential ambiguities in authority relationships that could prove to be highly destabilizing in the event of a future leadership crisis at the center, especially one involving the breakdown of elder control and the emergence of open splits among the successor leadership. In such an environment, the advantage would most likely go to those individuals who could gain and maintain access to China's command and control headquarters and those who could acquire the support of the GPD, which holds predominant influence over the political control apparatus.

8. *Those characteristics of the regional military structure most relevant to political involvement present a complex picture of middle- and low-level unit-based identification, limited lateral communication (especially between officers at the division, group army, and military region levels), and, in most (although not all) cases, leadership fragmentation at the upper levels, largely through the repeated intermingling by Beijing of high-level officers with differing career backgrounds.<sup>3</sup>* The resulting pattern of vertical compartmentalization and high-level leadership diversity among military units is compounded by the virtual absence of significant links between regional and local military leaders and their civilian party and

<sup>3</sup>Significant variations to this general pattern exist in practice, however, as indicated below.

government counterparts. Such structures, when combined with the features of the command and control and party supervision system, suggest that major combat units within military regions are largely cohesive yet politically passive entities. Moreover, the low levels of lateral communication existing among regional military units could prove highly detrimental to the communist regime in a future crisis requiring coordinated responses to social unrest.

9. *The general structural characteristics of the regional military, when combined with the personalized, factional dynamics of authority relationships suggest that military regions and combat units in China would most likely take action during a political crisis at the center in response to a directive issued from the top of the command and control structure.* However, this response would inevitably be influenced by regional and unit leaders' assessments of the personal political authority of those issuing the directive, especially their relationship to the dominant party and military elders. Under conditions of extreme conflict at the top, such assessments would probably become increasingly complex and conflictual, including calculations of the relative factional strength at the center of those issuing the directives, the relationship of such leaders to the internal factional affiliations of regional and unit heads, the continued effectiveness of the political control apparatus, and perhaps the manner in which the directive was issued (e.g., from inside or outside of the command and control headquarters in Beijing, or directly to individual combat units or through the normal chain of command). If confronted by a total collapse of political authority in Beijing, with many highly conflicting or unclear directives emerging from individuals or groups of leaders, most military regions and their subordinate units would probably seek to avoid involvement in the conflict altogether, while taking action locally to prevent social chaos. Only those regions or units with strong, unified links to individual leaders at the top would likely retain an incentive to act. The second most likely type of regional and unit action would probably be initiated from below, perhaps to support a beleaguered "patron" embroiled in factional maneuver. The least likely type of military action would involve independent coordination of unit behavior at the group army level and below, i.e., a planned military "mutiny" in opposition to central or high-level regional leadership. The likelihood of each type of military action, however, will also be influenced by the attitudes and beliefs of soldiers toward party control and the political role of the PLA (points 13 and 14 below). The influence of this factor will likely increase as the political crisis at the top intensifies. For example, in the case of a total collapse of central authority and a resulting paralysis of the regional military leadership, it is possible that military units in southern and eastern provinces (including entire divisions, if not group armies) would opt to support pro-democracy elements in coastal cities.

## **SPECIFIC FEATURES**

1. *China's senior leadership can be divided into five major elder-led factions and two "wild card" leaders. Most of these political entities enjoy the support of high-level members of the formal PLA elite.* Three of these factions consist primarily of PLA elders: the Second FA/Hong Xuezhi Faction; the Third FA Faction under Zhang Aiping; and the Fifth FA/Bo Yibo Faction under Yang Dezhi. The remaining two factions consist of party elders: the

Yang Shangkun Faction, and the Chen Yun/Peng Zhen Grouping.<sup>4</sup> In addition, although retired and reportedly in poor health, two key senior PLA elders might play an important role in the system as individual "wild cards": Wang Zhen and Li Desheng. Deng Xiaoping plays a crucial role in maintaining stability among these factions. The breadth of his personal ties and support networks in the party-army structure and the high level of his seniority and prestige among his elder colleagues provide him with the necessary political resources to balance and mediate factional interactions and thereby maintain a tenuous control over the politico-military system. Thus, Deng's relationship to each of China's five major leadership factions, and the specific political strengths and weaknesses of each faction constitute key elements influencing the possible involvement of the PLA in a future succession struggle.

2. *The Second FA/Hong Xuezhi Faction currently enjoys a dominant position among PLA elder factions.* This is largely because of its obvious ties to Deng Xiaoping, its extremely strong internal unity, and, to a lesser extent, the personal links it enjoys with various central military sectors on the basis of past positions held by its leading members: Liu Huaqing, Xiang Shouzhong, You Taizhong, Qin Jiwei, and Hong Xuezhi. These sectors include the General Logistics Department under Zhao Nanqi, the PLA Navy, COSTIND, and the Second Artillery. Finally, the strength of the faction also derives from its dominant pattern of links to the uppermost leadership of several military regions, including the Beijing and especially the Nanjing MRs, and, in declining order, the Chengdu, Guangzhou, and Lanzhou MRs. These associations all largely derive from the past regional leadership positions held in these regions by Deng's Second FA associates. Despite such strengths, the Second FA/Hong Xuezhi Faction also displays several crucial weaknesses, which could become particularly significant in a post-Deng setting, or in the absence of other key individual elders. The faction no longer has many direct Second FA system affiliates among the formal military leadership at the center and in the regions, as it did in the late eighties. In fact, the declining strength of Second FA cadres among the formal PLA leadership, combined with the continued influence of Deng's elder associates, may be a source of resentment among other factions seeking to improve their position within the military. In addition, the faction's predominant strength among China's military regions depends to a great degree upon direct personal ties with individual Second FA elders (e.g., Nanjing's ties to Xiang Shouzhong), and thus could decline rapidly as a result of their death. Finally, the faction has few ties to senior party leaders below Deng.<sup>5</sup>

3. *The Third FA Faction under Zhang Aiping is the second strongest PLA elder faction.* This is largely because of the very prominent position within the PLA held by Zhang Aiping and the support this faction undoubtedly receives from Chi Haotian, the chief of the GSD. The faction may also enjoy additional links with the GSD as a result of Zhang's long tenure as one of its top leaders. The Third FA Faction is extremely well represented within COSTIND and the defense industry establishment overall, and probably enjoys very cordial relations with Deng Xiaoping and other elder veterans of the Second FA system.<sup>6</sup> However, a certain

<sup>4</sup>The term "grouping" is used in this case rather than faction because of the looser and more tentative nature of the associations existing among these two senior party elders.

<sup>5</sup>Few members of the central departments, and only one top leader within the military region command (Zhu Dunfa, commander of the Guangzhou MR) can be identified as former members of the Second FA system.

<sup>6</sup>More on the latter point below.

degree of friction probably exists between Deng and Zhang Aiping as a result of the latter's strong opposition to the Tiananmen crackdown. The faction also possesses a very substantial number of likely supporters among surviving senior PLA elders, many of whom are Third FA veterans.<sup>7</sup> In addition, the faction exhibits some links to the PLA Air Force under Wang Hai, the Academy of Military Sciences (through Political Commissar Yang Yongbin), and the PLA Navy (through Political Commissar Wei Jinshan). The Third FA Faction also exhibits some significant weaknesses, however, which hold particular significance for its potential role in a future succession struggle. Many of the large number of former Third FA cadres holding important posts at the center are associated with other factions, thus illustrating the limits of the FA system approach in delineating personal affiliations. More important, however, the faction is only weakly represented in China's military regions. It may possess some influence in the Beijing MR, the Nanjing MR (especially through Chi Haotian), and perhaps the Jinan MR, but none of these associations can be viewed as decisive. It has a negligible presence in the Chengdu and Lanzhou MRs, and no discernible affiliations in the Guangzhou and Shenyang MRs. Finally, the Third FA Faction probably has ties with leaders of the science and technology departments within the military regions, through Zhang Aiping. But such links are largely peripheral to our assessment of the political significance of the MR leadership as potential factors in elite struggle.

4. *The Fifth FA/Bo Yibo Faction under Yang Dezhi maintains high status within the PLA, but little actual independent power compared to the other two major PLA elder factions.* Its status derives from the extremely high prestige and respect enjoyed by Yang Dezhi as a result of his professional competence as a combat unit commander, Korean War leader, and long-term regional military head. He also served for several years during the eighties as chief of the GSD and high-level member of the CMC, as well as a vice minister of defense, for a brief period. The affiliation with party elder Bo Yibo also likely gives this faction support among senior state economic cadres such as Chen Yun (below). The significant weaknesses of this faction, however, place it at a distinct disadvantage in the leadership power structure. The North China FA was created out of many disparate units, including former members of the Fourth FA system, and was disbanded several years before the other field armies. As a result, very few former Fifth FA cadres hold important posts in the military today. For example, there is virtually no evidence indicating that the faction retains significant support in China's military regions, despite Yang Dezhi's extensive leadership role in the Jinan and Wuhan MRs and the early historical presence of the Fifth FA in North China. The most significant remaining personal links probably stem from Yang's role as a patron for former "southern" Fourth FA officers Zhang Wannian and Li Jiulong, currently commanding the Jinan and Chengdu MRs, respectively. Moreover, the strength of such ties is most likely diluted by links to other FA systems. The potential for Fifth FA support among central PLA organs is equally limited, perhaps based upon secondary ties to leaders such as Xu Xin (GSD deputy director) and Li Xuge (head of the Second Artillery). Finally, few PLA elders other than Yang Dezhi can be viewed as likely supporters of the faction, while Yang himself lacks strong political skills. Thus, even though the Fifth FA/Bo Yibo Faction probably enjoys considerable respect among mainstream, professional line commanders (especially those who served in the Korean War), its lack of strong, direct personal ties within the military leader-

<sup>7</sup>These include Ye Fei, Wei Guoqing, Zhang Zhen, Li Yaowen, Fu Kuiqing, and Wan Haifeng.

ship and political acumen incline it toward only a secondary role, perhaps as a supporter of other factions.

5. *The Yang Shangkun Faction is unique in many ways, exhibiting great strengths in a few, narrow areas, counterbalanced by significant weaknesses.* Its strengths derive from Yang Shangkun's extensive experience in very powerful central party organs, his dominant position within the top leadership as Deng Xiaoping's closest associate among the party elders, and the increasingly powerful position within the PLA attained by GPD Director Yang Baibing, his younger half-brother and supporter. The elder Yang is a quintessential organization cadre and staff political officer of the center, with long-term service within the CCP general office, the CMC and, to a lesser extent, the party secretariat. He is thus highly knowledgeable about aspects of party control over the military (including the command and control apparatus), but has little experience with combat units at the ground level. Yang does, however, retain some limited influence among current and former PLA officers of the Guangzhou MR, where he served as a leading party and government cadre immediately after the GPCR. Moreover, the elder Yang has been able to augment his political position by relying upon the expanding factional network of the younger Yang. This is founded primarily upon the latter's unprecedented position as GPD director and concurrently CMC secretary-general, which gives him strong influence over the daily operations of the CMC, the PLA's political control system, and its mechanisms for personnel evaluation and promotion. Yang Baibing has also apparently succeeded in expanding his support base into other major central PLA organs, including the GLD (through Zhou Keyu), and the Second Artillery (through Liu Anyuan). These PLA leaders may also provide Yang with limited links to the Jinan and Shenyang MRs. Equally important, Yang Baibing's long-term presence as a political officer within the Beijing MR has allowed him to develop a factional base in that region that may rival or exceed the influence of the Second FA Faction. This almost certainly includes supporters within the PAP GHQ as well. Despite such notable strengths, the Yang Shangkun Faction displays significant weaknesses, especially when viewed in a post-Deng setting. It has few clear supporters among the regional leadership outside the Beijing MR, and few personal, field unit-based links to the PLA officer corps. In addition, the faction undoubtedly suffers from its close association with the Tiananmen crisis and the subsequent repoliticization of the PLA, as well as a lack of strong ties to both the GSD and the defense industry establishment. It may be held in considerable contempt by both younger, reform-minded PLA officers throughout the military (especially in the central organs outside of the GPD), and very senior, retired and semi-retired PLA elders, who resent the growing power of the Yangs and their apparent tendency to ignore the interests and views of the elders. Such tensions may include a basic conflict with leading Second FA elders such as Qin Jiwei and Liu Huaqing.<sup>8</sup>

6. *The Chen Yun/Peng Zhen Grouping is probably the least cohesive of the major elder factions, yet it is currently the most important force within the top party leadership outside of the Deng Xiaoping/Yang Shangkun alliance.* Its political strengths derive primarily from the high stature and personal contacts of Chen Yun and Peng Zhen (resulting from their long tenure as senior party leaders and government cadres), and the support it receives from both conservatives and extreme hardliners within the party. Indeed, these shared features

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<sup>8</sup>It must be pointed out, however, that these latter observations are subject to considerable debate within the analytical community, and should not be assumed to be true, as noted in Chapter 4.

largely explain the faction's internal unity.<sup>9</sup> Chen is viewed as a highly competent, senior patron of the economic and finance bureaucracy, with a reputation for resisting Maoist-style radicalism and defending the prerogatives of the party leadership. He is also the major elder patron of Premier Li Peng, the most important challenger to Deng Xiaoping's designated successor (CCP General Secretary Jiang Zemin (see below)), and a senior figure to other elder economic cadres such as Bo Yibo. However, Chen's links to the PLA are extremely weak. Peng Zhen's presence adds a more hardline ideological dimension to the grouping (e.g., he was a strong supporter of the use of military force during Tiananmen), and may provide some limited, pre-1949 ties to the PLA, especially in the conservative northeast. These factors suggest that the most significant weakness of this grouping lies in its tenuous links to the PLA, which presents a major contrast with the strong PLA ties enjoyed by the dominant Deng Xiaoping/Yang Shangkun alliance. It also no doubt suffers, along with the Yang Shangkun Faction, from its close connection to Tiananmen. Thus, from a medium- to long-term perspective, it may possess the weakest political base among the major elder factions of the leadership.

7. *Wang Zhen and Li Desheng stand as separate outsider "wild cards" among the elder factions, each potentially capable of influencing the political balance at the top of the Chinese leadership.* Li Desheng may enjoy personal ties with Second FA elders such as Chen Xilian and You Taizhong. However, the former officer was removed from power in 1980 for his association with GPCR radicalism, while the latter is clearly allied with Li's rival and opponent within the Second FA system, Deng Xiaoping. Indeed, his personal conflict with Deng explains why Li is not a member of the Second FA Faction, despite his long-term historical association with that FA system. Instead, the extent of Li Desheng's potential power within the politico-military system today rests largely upon the level of influence he retains within the Shenyang MR, which he led from 1973 to 1985, and the state of his health. The pattern of personnel movement among the leading officers of that region since Li's departure suggests that he may have lost his link to Shenyang, as argued in Chapter 5. Moreover, he is reported to have suffered a debilitating stroke. Thus, Li Desheng's political influence as a PLA elder *may* be more problematic today compared to that of Wang Zhen. Wang's influence within the politico-military system derives primarily from his continuous, strong links to the Lanzhou MR in the northwest, and his high stature among senior party and military leaders, especially hardliners. The latter derives from his association with the highly revered former PLA Marshal Peng Dehuai in the late forties, his overall long-term experience as both a commander and political commissar within the First FA system, the numerous high-level posts he held after 1949 in various party, state, and military organs, and his reputation as a militant hardliner and staunch advocate of the Tiananmen crackdown. The last point is also, of course, one of Wang's key weaknesses, along with his lack of direct, personal ties to current PLA leaders outside the northwest, and his reportedly poor state of health.

These major characteristics of the dominant elder factions and their supporters suggest the existence of cross-cutting interests and affiliations that could serve as a basis for possible fac-

<sup>9</sup>Peng and Chen are also associated on the basis of common service in the "white" areas of China during the thirties, their key involvement in Mao Zedong's rectification movement during the Yan'an period of the forties, and their brief service together in the northeast within the Fourth FA system, as noted above.

tional alliances, as well as differences and tensions that could produce confrontation and conflict.

8. *A basis exists for a political alliance between the Yang Shangkun Faction, the Chen Yun/Peng Zhen Grouping, and Wang Zhen.* This is largely because of their common, close association with and support for the Tiananmen crackdown, and the fact that they currently wield comparatively greater political influence within the regime than their elder colleagues within the PLA. Such an affiliation could be undermined by the emergence of a confrontation between Yang Shangkun and Chen Yun over the disposition of Jiang Zemin and Li Peng, if Yang remains committed to the promotion of Deng's chosen successor. A more serious problem would exist if Peng Zhen indeed detests Yang Shangkun, as some analysts believe. Yet both problems could be overcome and an alliance maintained if it were feared that an open split between the two dominant party elder factions might precipitate widespread social disorder and direct, large-scale military involvement in politics, resulting in a strengthening of the political positions of either the Second FA Faction or the Third FA Faction, or both. Yang Shangkun and Chen Yun probably share a common desire to avoid such possibilities, not only because of an obvious fear of chaos, but also because neither party elder faction enjoys strong, broadly based links to leading PLA elders and the regional military outside Beijing. Moreover, the Yang Shangkun Faction would not want to jeopardize its gains within the Beijing MR and the PAP (and its attempts to expand its base within the regional PLA beyond Beijing) by precipitating the more direct involvement of PLA elder factions in leadership politics. The likelihood of such military involvement might be reduced if the two factions obtained the support of the less powerful (and thus more controllable) Fifth FA/Bo Yibo Faction, which could conceivably mediate on behalf of Yang Shangkun and Chen Yun with Zhang Aiping and the Second FA elders. A basis for association with this faction derives from the fairly strong links existing between Bo Yibo and the Chen Yun/Peng Zhen Grouping, as a result of common service: in the "white areas" during the thirties (in the case of Peng Zhen), as leading economic cadres before the GPCR (in the case of Chen Yun), and as leading opponents of Maoist radicalism during most of the sixties.<sup>10</sup>

9. *A stronger basis for alliance exists between the two most important PLA elder factions: the Second FA/Hong Xuezhi Faction and the Third FA Faction under Zhang Aiping.* This derives not only from both Liu Huaqing's and Hong Xuezhi's past close links to the defense industry in the sixties and seventies,<sup>11</sup> but also from the Third FA backgrounds of several of the leading regional officers and service arm commanders associated with senior Second FA elders such as Xiang Shouzhi and Liu Huaqing, e.g., Zhang Lianzhong, Wei Jinshan, Wang Chengbin, Song Qingwei, and Zhang Taiheng. It is also supported by the fact that Chi Haotian was chosen by Deng to lead the GSD. Finally, according to Whitson, the leaders of the Second and Third FAs enjoyed a highly cooperative relationship prior to 1949.<sup>12</sup> Common participation in the defense industry also serves as a basis for association between both of these factions and the Fifth FA/Bo Yibo Faction. Yang Dezhi and Zhang Aiping in particular may be closely related on the basis of their common involvement after 1949 in defense modernization under Nie Rongzhen, as well as their joint service in the GSD and CMC, and their

<sup>10</sup>Such links might also be reinforced by Peng Zhen's separate ties to the Fifth FA system.

<sup>11</sup>Also, Liu is currently reported to be the CMC member responsible for military R&D, serving as a key intermediary between COSTIND and the upper leadership of the PLA.

<sup>12</sup>Whitson, 1973, p. 510.

more recent extensive involvement together in military modernization under the reforms.<sup>13</sup> Some basis for conflict also exists among these three PLA factions, however, over the relative priority to be placed upon order versus development, even assuming that all support continued party control. For example, because of its very close connections to military modernization (especially through increased contacts with the West), the Zhang Aiping/Third FA group may contain the strongest proponents within the PLA of further reform. In contrast, the Fifth FA/Bo Yibo Faction could play a central role as a voice for stability, but not necessarily as a force for far-reaching change. Other latent divisions may also exist among the three major PLA factions between supporters and opponents of the Tiananmen crackdown. In addition, common resentment toward the Second FA elders may emerge in a post-Deng setting because of their disproportionate representation at the highest levels of the military leadership. Overall, however, such differences probably do not outweigh the likely bases for cooperation, at least among the Second and Third FA Factions.

*10. Thus, the Fifth FA/Bo Yibo Faction could serve as a bridge between the two major potential factional alliances of party and military elders, or support one over the other in a confrontation.* Other bases for association include the likely links existing between Yang Shangkun, Zhang Aiping, and the Second FA elders as a result of their common, close ties with Deng Xiaoping in the reform effort, as well as the Second FA background of Yang Baibing. In fact, such connections might give Yang considerable leverage in his relationship with both Chen Yun and Wang Zhen, allowing him to possibly shift his position toward the less hardline PLA elders and perhaps increase his support for further reform. However, as mentioned above, strong bases for conflict might exist between the dominant party elders (especially Yang Shangkun and Peng Zhen) and many PLA elders, largely over their differing views toward Tiananmen and its consequences, and the political maneuverings of the Yangs. In particular, Yang Baibing's high visibility as an energetic proponent of PLA repoliticization could serve to constrain the elder Yang in making overtures to more moderate military leaders, unless the younger Yang moves even further away from hardline policies, as he began to do in 1991–92. Moreover, both Yangs might view Chi Haotian as a key opponent within the formal PLA leadership at the center. Such problems could outweigh the possible ties between the party and military elders under certain circumstances. Unfortunately, information on these critical points is extremely scarce.

*11. The broad-based, party-army experiences of China's elder leadership stand in sharp contrast to the much narrower, essentially civilian, and often technical, backgrounds of China's designated successors.* None in the latter group possesses the political contacts, administrative capabilities, vision, and broad prestige to lead a credible, enduring successor regime. More important, both Jiang Zemin and Li Peng lack significant, independent ties to the PLA. Yet each leader is backed by a different dominant elder (Deng Xiaoping and Chen Yun, respectively). The only member of the current successor leadership with notable ties to the military is Vice Premier Zou Jiahua, a likely follower of Jiang Zemin. Zou's military ties are concentrated in COSTIND and the defense industry sector, and thus could serve to further reinforce the existing links between the Second and Third FA factions. Such links

<sup>13</sup>Yang Dezhi was transferred from Kunming by Deng to take the latter's post as director of the GSD in 1980. Zhang thus served under him from 1980–82. Both men were then together in the CMC as deputy secretaries-general for several years, and both became very active in implementing the military reform program.



will not provide Jiang Zemin with the influence he needs to maintain independence in a post-Deng setting, however.

12. *The present leadership configuration of China's military regions suggests that some are capable of playing an active role in a future succession struggle, as either potential sources of military support tied to specific factions at the center, or as semi-independent actors seeking to further their interests in a more anarchic setting marked by the collapse of central political control.* Although Shenyang is strategically placed to play a major role in the succession struggle, its political "stake" in such a struggle may be highly limited. Given its lack of clear ties to the center and its probable conservatism, the overriding consideration for Shenyang in the context of an escalating leadership conflict may be to guarantee continued social order by throwing its support behind the strongest (and perhaps the most authoritarian) faction or factional alliance in Beijing. In contrast, the Beijing MR and other armed units in the capital such as the PAP and the Beijing Garrison Command are inextricably linked to the factional game at the center, because of the strong presence within their leadership of officers associated with both the Yang Shangkun Faction and the Second FA/Hong Xuezhai Faction. Moreover, the political importance of the PAP has significantly increased since Tiananmen because of its greater incorporation into the PLA's command and control structure in China's major cities, and its emergence, along with the reserves and armed militia, as the key buffer between the PLA and society in any future incidence of popular unrest. The Yang Shangkun/Yang Baibing Faction almost certainly enjoys a predominant position in the military power structure within Beijing, and in the political control apparatus within the military regions. Key support for military units or party leaders in the capital associated with the Second FA elders may come from regions outside Beijing, especially the Nanjing MR. Although also likely supportive of the Second FA elders, the Chengdu and Lanzhou MRs will probably be unable or unwilling to translate such support into decisive political action. The Jinan and Guangzhou MRs will be even less able to act in a future succession struggle, in whatever manner, given the extreme diversity of their leaderships' political affiliations.

13. *The experiences of the Cultural Revolution, military and societal reform trends (including the opening to the West), and the Tiananmen crisis and its aftermath have together generated intense confusion and much resentment, anger, and suspicion within the ranks of the PLA officer corps over the military's involvement in leadership politics.* These issues include the legitimacy of continued communist party rule, the proper balance between politicization and professionalization in military policy, the proper role of the PLA in handling future domestic social and political unrest, and the overall acceptability of China's current post-Tiananmen political leadership. As in the party and society as a whole, negative attitudes in the PLA toward the general legitimacy of communist party rule and opposition to those hardliners within the current leadership were greatly intensified by Tiananmen, as was the long-standing desire to keep the military out of future domestic leadership struggles. Such views tend to be concentrated among younger PLA officers, especially those holding subordinate staff positions in regional command headquarters located in China's coastal areas and in the PLA central departments and offices in Beijing. At the same time, however, the events of June 3–5, 1989, have also greatly intensified the military's traditional fear of chaos and heightened an awareness of its importance as both the defender of the only viable political institution in China (i.e., the party) and the only guarantor of social order. These latter views are apparently held by a wide range of officers, at all levels of the military hierarchy. They are especially concentrated, however, among the most powerful PLA leaders, i.e., the heads of mili-

tary regions, central departments, and other key military organs in Beijing. Such views generally serve to reinforce this group's support for the party leadership, while also justifying their continued involvement in the political intrigues of the elder factions.

*14. It is impossible to accurately assess the relative strengths of these various attitudes and beliefs within the military, and the extent to which they may influence the calculations of individual leaders in key positions at various levels within the PLA hierarchy.* In general, the fragmented and diverse structure and interests of urban social groups and their resulting limited scope and influence suggest that progressive attitudes among the highly controlled officer corps remain highly scattered and unorganized. At most, a serious gap exists between the conservative elders and most of their immediate senior supporters within the formal PLA command on the one hand, and many younger, progressive officers at lower levels in the system on the other. Between these two poles lies a very large middle ground of patriotic officers, strongly committed to continued military and economic modernization, uncertain about the future of one-party rule, perhaps critical of Tiananmen, and to varying degrees supportive of renewed ties with the West. These divisions are far more important than any attitudinal differences stemming from the contrasting responsibilities of commanders and commissars in the PLA, and rival the influence over officer behavior exerted by factional loyalties in general. They will probably come increasingly into play as a factor in the political equation influencing military involvement in leadership politics as the succession crisis intensifies. In such escalating conflict, it is highly likely that military beliefs and views will be used as political weapons by contending leadership factions, to mobilize support and oppose or isolate opponents. Elite references to the Tiananmen crackdown in particular may serve as the central symbol for factional overtures to the military, given its relationship to all the major issues mentioned in point 13.

## **10. SCENARIOS OF MILITARY INVOLVEMENT: AN EVALUATION**

The above most salient features of China's politico-military system provide a credible basis for assessing the relative likelihood of at least four possible scenarios of PLA involvement in the political transition to the "post-elders era" in China. Although each of these scenarios could occur, several are "more likely" than others. They are therefore presented in general order of probability, from the least likely to the most likely. This analysis is followed, however, by a brief discussion of the manner in which the timing and order of death of the party and military elders, as well as certain political choices they make concerning crucial leadership and policy issues, could significantly alter the relative probability of the scenarios.

### **SCENARIO ONE: NONINTERVENTION**

This scenario involves the peaceful creation of a stable post-elder regime without significant involvement by the military. It is, on balance, the most unlikely short-term scenario, given the overall leadership, organizational, and attitudinal characteristics of the system. It is also unlikely, however, as a medium-term and long-term scenario, for many reasons summarized below:

- The historical legacy of PLA involvement in factional party politics, marked by the partisan intervention of individual military leaders and, at times, armed units of the PLA, and the continued importance of personalized, elder-led factional networks in China today.
- The presence of a very influential and ambitious military figure (Yang Baibing) within one of the most dominant elder factions in the top leadership and the likely anger and resentment that presence has produced among elements of the PLA.
- The personal links between armed forces in the Beijing area (and some powerful outlying military regions) and at least two central factions: the Yang Shangkun/Yang Baibing Faction and the Second Field Army Faction associated with Deng Xiaoping.
- The narrow, essentially civilian backgrounds of those contending, younger party leadership figures designated to succeed Deng Xiaoping and his colleagues; none possesses the strong military contacts, administrative capabilities, vision, and broad prestige necessary to lead a credible, enduring successor regime.
- The highly personalized, centralized, and compartmentalized power relationships existing within the system of military command and control and party supervision over the PLA, presenting major irregularities in procedure and potential ambiguities in authority relationships that could prove to be highly destabilizing in the event of a future leadership crisis at the center.
- The intensity of internal disagreement and anger among the PLA officer corps over such issues as the legitimacy of continued communist party rule, the proper balance to maintain between politicization and professionalization in military policy, and the proper role of the PLA in handling future domestic social and political unrest; such sentiments are increasingly mixed with the military's traditional fear of chaos and a heightened awareness

of its importance as the defender of China's only viable political institution (i.e., the party) and the final guarantor of social order.

All these factors argue strongly for some type of PLA involvement in the transition to the post-elder era, whether violent or nonviolent, extensive or limited, or stabilizing or destabilizing in nature.

The absence of any military involvement in this transitional process would require major changes in many of these factors, each acting to minimize the pressures or incentives for military involvement in politics as the elders depart the scene, and to reinforce the creation of a highly stable civilian successor regime. Most important, party elders such as Yang Shangkun and Chen Yun would need to cooperate fully in selecting a single younger party leader with a significant level of ties to leading PLA officers, in order to avoid the emergence of a politically weak and contested successor regime. They would also almost certainly need to jettison the most obvious symbols of the Tiananmen crackdown and subsequent repression among the party and military leaderships (including Li Peng, Zhang Gong, and perhaps several regional officers such as Cao Pengsheng), and continue economic policies designed to maintain growth and employment in society. As part of this process, Yang Baibing would probably also need to further soften his hardline stance toward the PLA, and remain out of the top party leadership.

It is extremely difficult to imagine how such changes could occur in a political system marked by strong incrementalism and individual rule. The above major shifts in policy and personnel would more likely occur as a result of the victory of a single faction enjoying strong ties to the military, and would probably involve some bloodshed. Moreover, such a process would by no means ensure the creation of a stable, enduring regime capable of dealing with subsequent challenges.

## SCENARIO TWO: UNIFIED, PROGRESSIVE MILITARY INTERVENTION

This scenario posits the seizure of power by an alliance of radical, "middle class" military and civilian leaders and the creation of a more open, perhaps noncommunist, state, similar to those established in Hungary, Poland, and Czechoslovakia after 1989. Historically, such an event has been led by middle-ranking professionalized officers allied in a collective junta and disgusted with the corruption, incompetence, and passivity of the oligarchs controlling the *ancien regime*. According to Huntington, this type of military intervention has usually taken place in two stages: an initial "breakthrough" coup involving both moderate military leaders with links to the oligarchs and more radical, Westernized elements, and a subsequent "consolidating" coup consisting of purely radical officers dedicated to the complete rejection of the old order.<sup>1</sup>

These types of military coups have been most prevalent in Latin America and the Middle East. In China, however, the conditions for such progressive military behavior over the short to medium term are extremely weak at best. Although the PLA made very significant strides forward during the reforms of the eighties in developing many of the institutional and procedural elements of a modern military force, it still does not approximate the corporatist, politi-

<sup>1</sup>Huntington, 1976, pp. 220-221.

cally autonomous military structures found in much of the noncommunist Third World. Its officer corps remains highly factionalized along largely vertical lines and subject to stringent political controls limiting informal contact and discussion. Although an unknown number of middle-ranking and junior officers have probably developed "extreme" solutions to China's problems (e.g., the establishment of a South Korean-type political system), they have virtually no means of uniting and acting on such beliefs.<sup>2</sup> This is especially important, since most reform coups require years of preparation and discussion (and often several "anticipatory" coups) before they can occur. Instead, individuals or small groups of like-minded officers within single military units almost certainly keep their political antennae focused upward, looking for a high-level patron capable of legitimizing their beliefs and thereby mobilizing and increasing their numbers. Unfortunately, the emergence of such an individual would almost surely prompt major opposition by political rivals (including those individuals supported by conservatives at lower levels), probably leading to severe conflict, rather than a unifying coup. In addition, Chinese society has yet to develop coherent urban and rural social groups with distinct interests. In particular, the internally cohesive, self-conscious middle-class groups that often provide the stimulus for progressive military coups in the Third World do not yet exist in China.

Any coordinated, reform-minded military intervention in China's leadership struggle would probably only occur as a consequence of a major reduction of centralized political control over China's military forces and the related acceleration of the "radicalization" of the officer corps at all levels. It would also most likely require, as a catalyst, a very severe political crisis at the top that threatened the restoration of rule by hardline leadership elements in an environment of intense social protest. These events would probably be necessary to overcome the military's reluctance to become embroiled in politics and to unify disparate moderate military leaders high in the system. Moreover, all of these preconditions would most likely emerge only after a period of very significant change marked by the passing of most elders, the emergence of a weak successor leadership, and, most important, the gradual polarization of the politico-military leadership into two camps: a relatively weak coalition of predominantly civilian party hardliners, and a stronger coalition of military moderates and progressives. This also implies that the victory of a reformist coalition of military leaders would probably require the use of military force. However, the extent of violence would most likely depend upon the relative balance of forces on each side, as measured by the strength of their respective personal links to major armed forces in and around Beijing.

Once in power, a progressive military regime would almost certainly be subject to enormous social pressures to rapidly expand the level of political participation in the Chinese system. In a situation marked by weakened central control, such pressures could threaten the acceleration of *de facto* regionalism and a breakdown of national unity. These fears would doubtless serve to split any progressive military coalition into those favoring significant political reform under military supervision and those favoring permanent, centralized military rule to bar corrupt civilians from power and provide a basis for the implementation of limited reforms designed, in part, to hold the country together. Such a confrontation could easily create a political gridlock at the top, greater social protest, and very uncertain consequences.

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<sup>2</sup>Huntington, 1976, p. 222.

### SCENARIO THREE: UNIFIED, CONSERVATIVE MILITARY INTERVENTION

This scenario posits the intervention of the military as either an obedient tool of the civilian party leadership, or as an independent force, to prevent social chaos and establish a stable, authoritarian order for the transition to the post-elder era. In this type of involvement, the military would seek to perform the "guardianship role" toward society so often witnessed in unstable Third World states. In the Chinese case, this role would be carried out either in response to the orders of a beleaguered communist party, or independently, most likely to veto movement by the central leadership toward the expansion of political participation within the entire system. In both cases, however, the PLA would act as a unified, conservative force for order and continued authoritarian control.

Such a scenario stands a greater chance of realization over the short to medium term than Scenario Two because of the heightened fear of social chaos generated by the Tiananmen crisis, which plays to the PLA's traditional desire to preserve order and national unity. This fear is undoubtedly more strongly felt by different factions and generations of leaders in the PLA, and by many of the rank and file from the countryside, than the desire to overturn the party elders or push for more progressive policies. Nevertheless, severe obstacles to unified, conservative military intervention would remain.

In the past, relatively "unified" military support for the party leadership was attainable because authoritative elder leaders were controlling events in Beijing and enjoyed the confidence of their military colleagues. This occurred during the Tiananmen crisis, albeit with some difficulty, because of the presence of Deng Xiaoping and Yang Shangkun. It also occurred, for somewhat different reasons and to different ends, during the Cultural Revolution, because of the presence of Mao Zedong and the specific political environment of that period. While such "unified" military intervention on behalf of the party could thus probably take place again (assuming that Deng, Yang, or other elders with authority in the military remained clearly in charge at the top), it would become extremely problematic during a more unstable transition period. This would almost certainly be marked by a reduction in the influence of the party elders and a likely increase in factional maneuvering among the successor leadership.

Under such conditions, attempts to attain cohesive military support could easily break down, producing either a version of the "veto coup" mentioned above, or variants of Scenario Four (discussed below), involving piecemeal intervention by party-army factions. The former would probably become more likely, however, only if political factions dedicated to major political reform and a reversal of verdicts on the Tiananmen crisis appeared to be gaining the upper hand over hardliners in the leadership, and the escalating leadership struggle had threatened major social unrest, especially in China's cities. These developments would be necessary to establish the basis for the type of order-oriented coalition of military leaders that could fashion a relatively unified military response.

However, even if successful, such a coup would almost certainly bring only temporary relief to the political system, as in Scenario Two. Once in power, a conservative coalition would be subjected to enormous pressures, most likely posing a much more serious threat to social order than a unified progressive intervention. In this instance, all leading elements of the PLA would probably be drawn into the political maelstrom at the top. Moreover, the military would face the intensely distasteful prospect of forcefully suppressing a more defiant urban

populace than existed in spring 1989, thereby provoking another, more intense, round of international censure. Some members of the coalition would probably favor efforts to legitimize the conservative regime by using a civilian puppet to offer political compromises to the urban populace, while moving forward with greater economic reforms. Others would doubtless demand a system of permanent, overt military rule designed to prevent any significant political reforms. This latter viewpoint would be similar to the one mentioned in Scenario Two, although enjoying greater leadership support in this case.

Under such a situation, conflict at the top could more easily spread beyond Beijing and involve outside regional military units. This would be especially likely if the leadership of the Shenyang MR retained its conservative stance (perhaps supporting the Yang Baibing Faction in the capital), while the Nanjing MR took a more reform-oriented position, perhaps in support of officers associated with remaining members of the Second Field Army Faction, as well as the Third Field Army Faction under Zhang Aiping and Chi Haotian. This configuration of forces could present the basis for a degeneration of the leadership struggle into limited civil war or, short of that, enhanced regionalism. Indeed, this situation represents the most likely scenario for the precipitation of a serious breakdown of political unity and accompanying civil war in China.

#### **SCENARIO FOUR: FACTIONAL MILITARY INTERVENTION**

This scenario posits the limited involvement of individual military leaders, and perhaps specific armed units, as part of factional maneuvering related to an escalating succession struggle. It could occur either as a consequence of an unsuccessful attempt at unified military intervention (Scenarios Two and Three), or as part of a power seizure by a single faction or group of allied factions (i.e., a version of the classic "palace revolution").<sup>3</sup> In both cases, however, it would represent a response by civil-military leaders to a rapid escalation of regime instability and perhaps also the threat of massive social protest and disorder. On balance, it is the most probable scenario for military participation in leadership politics.

Given the dominant features of the Chinese politico-military system, it is likely that maneuvering among potential successors will intensify as party and military elders depart the political arena. Moreover, the more active among the remaining elders will probably continue to press for their own separate candidates for supreme leader, thus producing a continuous, high level of political instability at the top. Barring the unlikely emergence of a highly capable leader with unrivaled ties to the PLA, the overall leadership structure would probably become increasingly precarious as the last of the more influential elders pass away. In the absence of these unique individuals, the contending members of a successor leadership will almost certainly feel increasing pressures to reach out to the military for support, as has occurred in past political crises in China. In this effort, some party leaders might attempt to increase their standing among PLA conservatives and all those committed to order as a first priority. Others might seek to garner the support of more moderate, reform-minded officers, perhaps hoping to consolidate a strong base among younger individuals. Regardless of their political leanings, all potential successors will no doubt seek to build on whatever indirect, personal ties to the PLA they may have established through their past links to the elders, as

<sup>3</sup>See Huntington, 1976, pp. 197, 201-202.

well as any (probably weak) direct ties they may enjoy with members of the successor military leadership.

In such a contest, the handling of the Tiananmen crisis and its aftermath could become a key issue of debate, given its symbolic importance to many of the issues influencing leadership views within the party and the military. Specifically, evaluations of the Tiananmen crisis could serve as the major means of defining and building factional strength among successors, with some individuals perhaps calling for a partial or complete "reversal of verdicts" for those convicted of political crimes during spring-summer 1989. However, any public speeches by contending leaders that depart from the past official designation of the Tiananmen demonstrations as a "counterrevolutionary riot" would almost certainly send an immediate signal to the discontented in China's cities, sections of which may be willing to risk public demonstrations. In the absence of the elders, such a development would likely produce an intense internal leadership debate over the type of regime response needed. In this debate, some party leaders would likely argue for the use of strong measures to ensure order (appealing to the fear of chaos among the military), while others might urge caution and restraint, seeking to draw out moderate, even pro-democratic support within the party and military. This could further polarize the leadership.

Even without the specific catalyst provided by a debate over Tiananmen, however, the conflict within the successor leadership would probably become increasingly apparent to the outside, thus encouraging public protest. In such a volatile environment, the locus of party authority will almost certainly become extremely difficult to determine. High-level PLA officers (including those commanding the PAP and armed militia units charged with suppressing demonstrations) would likely be torn among a sense of personal loyalty to various party and military leaders, obedience to "formal" lines of command and control, and support for immediate order versus radical political change designed to ensure future social and economic development. Confusion within the military leadership would become particularly strong, and dangerous, if contending successors sought to gain access to the command and control structure of the PLA, and its system of political supervision, to obtain support from specific regional military commands.

Under these conditions, it would be extremely difficult for military leaders to remain aloof from attempts by feuding successors to draw them and their followers separately into the political struggle. Rather than maintain neutrality, or intervene on a cooperative basis (as in Scenarios One and Two), it is likely that, sooner or later, some military leaders would break ranks and opt for a show of force, in support of a specific party faction. Indeed, such an action could even occur in the very early stages of more active maneuvering by the successor leadership, as the last of the elders depart the scene. At that time, groups of military leaders may act out of a desire to preempt any social protest or disorder.

Initially, such military action will likely be limited to Beijing and its immediate environs because of the generally passive and politically divided nature of most regional military leaderships, the increasing importance of personal affiliations focused primarily upon individual units at the group army level and below, the overall low level of lateral communication within and across military regions, and the overall desire of military officers to remain out of party politics. On a more specific level, the restriction to the Beijing area of involvement by armed forces may also result from the likely predominant role played by Yang Baibing in any



power seizure, as either supporter or target. Yang's power base is in the capital, as are many of his major apparent opponents.

Over time, however, situations could certainly emerge that would serve to expand the conflict into several, if not all, military regions. Much would depend on the longevity of the conflict at the center, the political stance of key regional leaderships, and a host of other variables influencing the ability of the coup leadership in Beijing to consolidate power quickly and minimize social unrest. Conversely, it is also possible that a limited coup could provide the basis for the transition to a stable successor regime over the medium to long term. This could result in the emergence of a relatively unified, reform-oriented, military-led regime supportive of continued economic and technocratic modernization, but opposed to significant political liberalization. Eventually, such a military regime might serve as the basis for the creation of new, broad-based political institutions capable of promoting more radical social and economic reform, and of absorbing growing social forces. But such a transformation would likely depend upon the appearance in the top leadership of younger political and military leaders more responsive to pressures for systematic change.

## 11. THE DEPARTURE OF THE ELDERS

Of course, no scenario is inevitable. The precise configuration of forces influencing the pattern of interaction between the military and the successor leadership will be determined, to a great extent, by the order of departure of China's elder leaders and the resulting political calculations such events precipitate. Many unknown factors of importance play a role in this realm, largely involving the outlooks and associations of individual elders and subordinate leaders in formal positions of power within the central and regional party and military apparatus. In general, however, the likelihood of unstable patterns of military intervention will increase if Deng Xiaoping, Yang Shangkun, and likely military "moderates" such as Liu Huaqing and Zhang Aiping depart the political arena well in advance of conservatives and hardliners such as Chen Yun, Peng Zhen, and Wang Zhen. Instability will also become more likely if Yang Shangkun's half-brother Yang Baibing reverses his present course and moves back toward the hardliner camp, continuing to increase his power base, and if various internal and external events serve to push apart the "natural alliance" between the Second Field Army and Third Field Army Factions.

In contrast, relative stability will probably result, at least over the short to medium term, from the deaths of both Deng Xiaoping and the leading hardliners and the continued presence at the top of Yang Shangkun. This assumes, however, that Yang will provide opportunities for the emergence of a more reform-oriented regime that includes the gradual reduction of political controls over the military and thus moves toward reducing the "gap" in political attitudes existing between younger officers in the PLA and those at the upper-middle levels. Even if hardliners such as Peng Zhen and Wang Zhen survived Deng's death, they might be encouraged to assert their position more openly, thus allowing Yang to oppose them more credibly, and to eventually move toward greater reform. This, in turn, could perhaps lead to a resolution of conflict over the Tiananmen demonstrations through a partial "reversal of verdicts" on their official characterization as a counterrevolutionary riot.

The greatest potential for short-term stability, however, will most likely result from the early passing of most party and military hardliners and the creation of a more uniform, reform-oriented successor party leadership less prone to internal splits through manipulation by the elders. Deng Xiaoping is apparently aiming at the establishment of such a leadership through the replacement of PBSC members Li Peng, Yao Yilin, and Song Ping by reformers such as Zhu Rongji, Zou Jiahua, and Tian Jiyun at the upcoming 14th Party Congress. If Deng is successful, he may establish a basis for enduring, unified military support of a successor regime by a coalition of senior, pro-reform PLA leaders of the Second and Third FA systems, perhaps with the acquiescence of Yang Dezhi. (The elimination of Yang Baibing from the political equation, or, alternatively, his acceptance of a secondary role as a pro-reform military figure excluded from the highest levels of the party leadership, would probably constitute a key prerequisite for the emergence of such a unified military support structure.) Such a development would significantly lessen pressures for any form of partisan military intervention in the succession process, and perhaps establish the foundation for an early transition to the kind of pro-reform yet anti-liberal regime mentioned above.

Even under such "ideal" conditions, however, the new Chinese leadership would still almost certainly be faced, over the medium or long term, with growing pressures for a broadening of political participation as a result of continued economic and social development, thus posing the prospect of a radical redefinition or rejection of communist party rule. Such pressures could easily lead to the emergence of serious splits within the formerly unified successor regime and its pro-reform military supporters, as individual leaders came forward with differing solutions to the growing dilemma, thus threatening a Scenario Four-type situation.

Under such circumstances, the key to long-term stability will almost certainly lie again with the Chinese military, in this case most likely with a new generation of younger military leaders, as suggested above. These younger officers could serve as the guarantors of long-term stability for a nondemocratic Chinese regime marked by growing economic regionalism and overall growth (i.e., a variant of Scenario Three). Alternatively, they could also serve as the facilitators of radical social and economic change and political liberalization, as witnessed in South Korea (i.e., a variant of Scenario Two). Any realistic assessment of the relative likelihood of these or any other long-term scenarios will require far more detailed data on the political characteristics of China's emerging military leaders than are currently available.

## 12. POSTSCRIPT: IMPLICATIONS OF THE 14TH PARTY CONGRESS

The long-awaited 14th Congress of the Chinese Communist Party was held October 12–18, 1992. The congress and the first plenary session of its new central committee (convened immediately afterward) issued major policy pronouncements and formalized major personnel changes in the politburo standing committee, the politburo, the central military commission, and the central committee. Many of these changes were expected, while several definitely were not. Together, they have major implications for the balance of forces among the key leadership factions defined in this Report and the evolving dynamics of party-army relations in China.

As expected, the Congress Political Report, delivered by General Secretary Jiang Zemin, focused mainly on the Chinese economy. It largely confirmed the ascendancy of Deng Xiaoping's stress on an accelerated and more open and market-oriented approach to development, although it also hinted that opposition to Deng's line still exists within the leadership. Concerning the latter point, Jiang specifically urged the party to guard mainly against "leftist" (i.e., conservative) tendencies, particularly among the leading cadres. At the same time, he also emphasized that China will continue to reject any attempt to establish a Western-style political system and reiterated that the struggle against peaceful evolution will continue for a long period. This struggle requires, according to Jiang, that senior party cadres remain "sober-minded." Such remarks suggest that the party leadership remains plagued by significant differences over the nature and extent of both economic and political reform.

Of more direct relevance to party-army relations, Jiang's report contained a lengthy, and unprecedented, description of the importance of the PLA to national stability and the breadth of its duties to the country and the party. Jiang stated that the PLA is to be made into a "powerful, modern, and regular revolutionary army," and that defense capabilities are to be constantly strengthened to provide protection for the reforms, opening up, and economic development. He added that the PLA's duties include the defense of China's "territorial sovereignty over the land and in the air, as well as its right and interests on the sea," the latter a likely reference to disputed territories in the South China Sea. Clearly, Jiang was calling attention to the PLA's role as the bulwark of reform (a major Dengist theme since late 1991, as noted in Chapter 4), a key recipient of China's modernization efforts, and the sole defender against foreign threats, all of which the majority of China's senior military leaders no doubt find highly acceptable to their institutional interests. Perhaps somewhat less acceptable to PLA professionals, however, was Jiang's recitation of the military's duty to "safeguard the unity and security of the motherland," a clear reference to its enhanced internal security role. Apparently in an attempt to allay PLA concerns over this issue, however, Jiang also emphasized the need to strengthen the role of the PAP and other public security organs "to more forcefully safeguard national security and social stability."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>For Jiang Zemin's Congress Report, see Xinhua Domestic Service, October 20, 1992, in *FBIS-CHI*, October 21, 1992, pp.1–21.

The ascendancy of Deng Xiaoping's economic policy line and the apparent greater attention given to the PLA in Jiang Zemin's report were also reflected in the personnel decisions taken by the Party Congress. As expected, several older members of the 13th Central Committee's politburo, including Yang Shangkun, Song Ping, Yao Yilin, Qin Jiwei, Wan Li, Wu Xueqian, Li Ximing, and Yang Rudai, were not reelected to the new body.<sup>2</sup> In their place, the politburo added 13 younger officials, including party secretaries from coastal cities and vanguard reform provinces and leading government and party cadres, as well as one PLA officer, thus increasing the total number of full members from 14 to 20.<sup>3</sup> In addition, two proponents of far-reaching reform remained from the previous Congress: Tian Jiyun and Li Tieying. They were the only two politburo members to survive on that body, with the exception of PBSC members Jiang Zemin, Li Peng, Qiao Shi, and Li Ruihuan. Three new PBSC members were elected to replace Song and Yao: PLA General Liu Huaqing, economic reformer Zhu Rongji, and Xizang (Tibet) Party Secretary Hu Jintao; their election increased the total membership from six to seven.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, three new faces appeared in the party secretariat, replacing Qiao Shi, Li Ruihuan, and Yang Baibing. All five members of the new secretariat are regarded as reformers.<sup>5</sup>

Most older party figures were also dropped from the central committee, thus leaving only a small minority of individuals over the retirement age of 65 within the highest organs of the party. Also among those dropped from the central committee were hardliners such as *Renmin Ribao* Director Gao Di, acting Culture Minister He Jingzhi, and party propaganda chief Wang Renzhi. Nearly half of the new members of the central committee come from the provinces, suggesting a continuation of the regime's emphasis on locally based, reform-oriented development. Finally, few members of the so-called Princelings Party were elected to the central committee. He Pengfei was bypassed, as were Deng Xiaoping's daughter, Deng Nan, and Chen Yun's son, Chen Yuan.

Taken together, these developments mark the culmination of the trend toward younger, more technically minded party leaders inaugurated at the National Party Conference in 1985.<sup>6</sup> Perhaps most indicative of this shift toward youth, competence, and reform was the promotion of Zhu Rongji to the PBSC and the formal abolition by the congress of the CAC. Zhu was elevated to the highest party body without first serving in either the central committee or the politburo, suggesting that Deng was finally able to win acceptance of (or acquiescence to) this assertive reformer as the leading economic official of the regime and the likely replacement for Li Peng as premier. The long expected elimination of the CAC ended the institutional vehicle through which nominally "retired" elders were able to exert influence over the

<sup>2</sup>Li Ximing was probably removed primarily because of his excessive hardline stance since Tiananmen, however, while Yang Rudai was most likely ousted more because of incompetence than age. See "The Fourteenth Party Congress: In Session," *China News Analysis*, No.1471, November 1, 1992, p.11.

<sup>3</sup>Five of the new civilian politburo full members are local leaders (an increase of two over the previous politburo), five are in the central government, and three are in central party organs. See *CNA*, p.12. The sole PLA representative is Yang Baibing, who replaced the retired Qin Jiwei. For more on Yang, see below.

<sup>4</sup>See Appendix J.

<sup>5</sup>Qiao, Li, and Yang were replaced by Hu Jintao, Wei Jianxing, and Ren Jianxin, while Wen Jiabao was promoted from alternate to full status. Ding Guangen remained as a full member.

<sup>6</sup>*China News Analysis*, No.1471, pp. 4, 6; Lincoln Kaye, "Uncertain Patrimony," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, October 29, 1992, pp. 10-12.

successor leadership. It cannot be said, however, that its demise will bring such influence to an end.

The other new civilian member of the PBSC cannot be as easily categorized as Zhu Rongji. Hu Jintao is a young engineer (born in 1942) with extensive experience as a state and party official in poorer, outlying areas such as Gansu, Guizhou, and Xizang. He was party secretary in the latter region during the 1989 rebellion and the subsequent imposition of martial law, and he also served for several years at both the provincial and central levels in the Communist Youth League (CYL). He joined the CCP CC as an alternate in 1982 and became a full member in 1985.

Hu's career has entailed a close association with both Song Ping (while in Gansu) and Hu Yaobang (through his CYL service). But neither of these connections explains his sudden rise to the highest echelon of the party. This was more likely due to his strong fealty to the party and Deng (shown primarily by his performance in Xizang), and thus almost certainly to the reforms. It may also be due to his apparent independence from any major leadership factions at the center. It was certainly not because of any close ties to the PLA, which are entirely lacking in his background.

Deng Xiaoping thus clearly achieved some very notable gains at the 14th Party Congress in his continuing effort to create a more unified successor leadership and to increase the momentum behind his more ambitious approach to economic reform. But did he also increase the likelihood of a peaceful and stable succession? Although now clearly outnumbered in the highest party councils, conservatives such as Li Peng either remain in place or have been promoted, while some well-known reformers lost their former posts.<sup>7</sup> In addition, Jiang Zemin is increasingly seen by many analysts as a less-than-enthusiastic proponent of more rapid reform. Some even believe that Deng would like to remove the party general secretary, but cannot do so because of the uproar it would create within the leadership.

More important than such factors in gauging the future stability of the Chinese regime, however, is the internal makeup of the PLA leadership and its relationship to the party elite. The congress witnessed major changes in these areas. The largest category of new members to the 14th Central Committee comprised individuals from the PLA—24 of 43 full members and 16 of 21 alternates—thus suggesting the increased significance of the military in China's political equation.<sup>8</sup> As a whole, the PLA lost 23 members but gained 40.<sup>9</sup> More important, however, the most politically significant (and unexpected) changes witnessed by the congress involved leading PLA officers, particularly those on the CMC. Qin Jiwei, Zhao Nanqi, Yang Baibing, and Yang Shangkun were all dropped from the CMC SC, while Liu Huaqing remained as a vice chairman, along with Jiang Zemin as chairman and Chi Haotian as a regular member. Zhang Zhen, a senior PLA elder and former president and political commissar of the NDU, was selected to assist Liu Huaqing (and of course Jiang Zemin) as the second CMC vice chairman. No one was chosen to replace Yang Baibing as CMC general secretary.

<sup>7</sup>For example, pre-1989 members of the party secretariat Yan Mingfu and Rui Xingwen failed to be reelected to the CCP CC. Both were strong supporters of Zhao Ziyang. In addition, Deng supporter Wan Li, Chairman of the NPC SC, was removed from the politburo, although almost certainly because of his advanced age, as suggested above.

<sup>8</sup>See Appendix J.

<sup>9</sup>See *China News Analysis*, No. 1471, p. 8.

Two regional commanders, Zhang Wannian and Fu Quanyou, and one PLA officer with both central and regional experience, Yu Yongbo, were also elevated to serve as regular CMC SC members. These promotions reflect Zhang's expected replacement of Chi Haotian as chief of the GSD, while Fu will become head of the GLD, and Yu will take over from Yang Baibing as head of the GPD. Although no longer on the CMC, Zhao Nanqi is expected to become the head of the highly influential AMS.

Most analysts expected that Qin Jiwei would retire and that Yang Shangkun would step down from his CMC and politburo posts and be replaced by Liu Huaqing as the elder in charge of daily affairs within the PLA. However, few thought that the CMC membership would undergo a wholesale transformation, and virtually no one expected that Yang Baibing would be removed from all of his PLA posts.<sup>10</sup> Indeed, as mentioned in this Report, many informed observers believed that Deng intended to pair Yang Baibing with Liu Huaqing, to serve, respectively, as the top professional commissar and commander of the PLA, and hence as the guarantors of Jiang Zemin's successor regime. Others thought that Yang Baibing would eventually become the major power broker among the successors.

The PLA dismissals and promotions provide a strong confirmation of the crucial importance of military leadership factions in the political calculations of Deng Xiaoping and his associates. Most notably, they indicate the extent to which factional maneuvering within the PLA had escalated in recent years. They also confirm the conclusion that the rising position of the Yangs in particular had become the most immediate threat to the internal stability and unity of the PLA leadership, and hence to China's successful transition to a post-Deng setting. It appears that Deng Xiaoping acted against the Yangs, perhaps somewhat reluctantly and in consultation with close associates such as Liu Huaqing and Wang Ruilin,<sup>11</sup> in the belief that only he could resolve the major schism that was forming within the military over the position of the two brothers. This suggests that Yang Baibing had indeed attained a very significant, albeit limited, power base within the PLA, as argued in Chapter 4. The fact that Deng acted so decisively also suggests that Yang Baibing and Jiang Zemin are in fact staunch enemies, a possibility discussed earlier in this Report. Deng may have realized that his chosen successor could not possibly survive his death while Yang Baibing held powerful leadership posts within the PLA.<sup>12</sup> If true, then Jiang Zemin might now possess an opportunity to act more decisively to strengthen his weak power base within the military and thereby improve his chances of becoming a viable successor.<sup>13</sup>

The specific pattern of military promotions and reassignments witnessed by the 14th Party Congress provide further confirmation of the analysis presented in this Report. Many of

<sup>10</sup>In this light, Yang's election to the politburo appears to be largely a relatively meaningless consolation prize.

<sup>11</sup>At least one knowledgeable former PLA officer in Beijing recently informed the author that Liu and Wang Ruilin played a crucial role in the decline of the Yangs by alerting Deng to the growing threat to military stability presented by their machinations. If true, this would suggest that Wang's obvious loyalties to Deng clearly overrode any support he may have given to Yang Baibing in the past.

<sup>12</sup>The extent to which the Yangs were regarded within the PLA as illegitimate power seekers is perhaps suggested by the fate of the much publicized PLA slogan of 1992 that called for the military to "Serve As a Protector and Escort" for the reforms (*Baojia Huhang*). As indicated in Chapter 4, Yang Baibing championed this slogan in order to show his support for Deng and thereby hopefully raise his own stature within the regime. The slogan has virtually disappeared from the media since the 14th Party Congress, suggesting that it was viewed as a factional tool of the Yangs, similar to the "Learn from the PLA" slogan used by Lin Biao to strengthen his political position in the mid-sixties.

<sup>13</sup>This argument is made by Tai Ming Cheung in "Back to the Front," *FEER*, October 29, 1992, p.16.

these changes suggest that leading members of the Second and Third FA systems have indeed formed, or strengthened, a factional alliance in support of order, military modernization, and professionalism that may serve to stabilize China's politico-military system, a possibility discussed in Chapter 9. This is most clearly indicated by the surprising appointment of Liu Huaqing to the politburo standing committee and the almost equally surprising selection of Zhang Zhen as Liu's "assistant" within the CMC. It is almost impossible to explain these two advances from the perspective of a professionalized, institutionalized military system. Liu is 76 years old, and Zhang is 78. Both were on the verge of retirement prior to the party congress, although Liu had been expected to continue to serve on the CMC for several more years, as mentioned above. His placement within the PBSC at this juncture marks a very significant reversal of the trend toward the complete removal of military figures from high-level party posts.<sup>14</sup> Moreover, Zhang Zhen's revival and elevation to vice chairman within the CMC certainly does not signify a move toward younger professionals, as was supposedly intended by the retirement of Qin Jiwei from that body.

Liu Huaqing is perhaps the foremost embodiment within the PLA officer corps of the close relationship between the Second and Third FA systems. A leading Second FA elder and close Deng associate, his career also brought him into close contact with several bastions of Third FA influence, especially the PLAN and the defense science and technology sector. In addition, he generally remained out of the central leadership struggles of the sixties, seventies, and eighties, developing a reputation as a competent, professional proponent of modernization. He was also not closely identified with Tiananmen, either as an enforcer of martial law or as a critic of the use of military force. Zhang Zhen is a very senior member of the Third FA Faction, with close ties to Zhang Aiping, as well as to Deng and Liu. He is a much-decorated and highly esteemed combat officer of both the pre-1949 and Korean War periods and a major figure in the history of military education, and he is undoubtedly a major symbol of professionalism and modernization in the PLA. Perhaps equally important, Zhang's association with the NDU probably allowed him to develop ties with the many middle-rank and senior officers who have attended the university over the years, thereby further augmenting his contacts.<sup>15</sup> Finally, like Liu Huaqing, but unlike Zhang Aiping, Zhang Zhen did not take a clear stand either for or against the Tiananmen incident.

The emergence of a stabilizing factional alliance between the Second and Third FA systems is also suggested by the backgrounds of most, if not all, of those younger PLA officers selected for promotion to the CMC by the congress, as well as many of those elevated to full membership on the 14th CCP CC. Surviving CMC member Chi Haotian is a major member of the Third FA Faction with close ties to Deng and other Second FA elders. None of his three new military colleagues on the CMC standing committee are directly associated with these dominant FA systems, but at least two exhibit likely indirect ties, as well as other very positive characteristics. Zhang Wannian is a leading veteran of the "southern" Fourth FA system and an "uprooted" cadre lacking a strong political base. His career suggests lateral links with several military regions and possible ties to Second FA elder You Taizhong, but no connection to the Yangs. His primary upward association is probably with the highly regarded Yang Dezhi. Fu Quanyou is a veteran of the politically weak First FA system with experience as a

<sup>14</sup>The last PLA figure to serve on the PBSC was Ye Jianying, who retired in 1985.

<sup>15</sup>Tai Ming Cheung, "Back to the Front," *FEER*, October 29, 1992, p.16.



leading officer in several military regions and possible ties to Second FA elder Xiang Shouzhi and, indirectly, to the Third FA Faction. Both officers (especially Fu Quanyou) have significant combat experience, but neither participated in Tiananmen. Because of these qualities, they are no doubt viewed by Deng and his associates as highly loyal, competent, and professional unit commanders enjoying considerable prestige among a large number of regional officers. From this perspective, their lack of strong FA or corps-based factional foundations is almost certainly seen as a major advantage for the upcoming succession. In a political crisis, this characteristic will probably serve to reduce the likelihood that they would employ their numerous career assets for political gain. Deng and Liu probably calculated that, among senior PLA regional leaders, Zhang and Fu would be the most likely to obey the orders of men like Jiang Zemin, Qiao Shi, and Zhu Rongji in a post-elder setting. Moreover, Zhang Wannian's links to Yang Dezhi probably add to his appeal, given Yang's prestige among professional commanders, his relative noninvolvement in politics, and his historical links to the Second FA Faction. This association may help to explain why Zhang was chosen to succeed Chi Haotian as director of the GSD.<sup>16</sup>

Yu Yongbo's advancement is much more difficult to interpret. He is identified in this Report as a close supporter of the Yangs, primarily because of possible early regional ties to Yang Shangkun and a more recent association with the GPD, Yang Baibing's PLA repoliticization campaign, and Tiananmen. Hence, his promotion to succeed Yang within the GPD, and his accompanying rise to the CMC, may signify a continuation of the Yang Faction's influence within that crucial department. Indeed, Deng and Liu may have been forced to promote Yu in order to avoid a major upheaval within the GPD, perhaps believing that Yu's influence could be held in check by the dominant Second and Third FA alliance. Conversely, it is also possible, as some analysts now believe, that Yu has abandoned the Yangs and has thrown his support behind Deng and Liu. This seems plausible. Yu's relationship with the Yangs was not based on a common long-term association with any PLA field units or military regions. Indeed, from a career perspective, Yu's strongest personal ties probably lie with fellow veterans of the "southern" Fourth FA system, such as Gu Hui, Gu Shanqing, Li Xilin, and even Zhang Wannian, which could provide a basis for indirect ties to Second FA elders such as You Taizhong.

The possibility of "defection" from the Yang camp can also be applied to other apparent Yang Baibing supporters who remain at the highest levels of the PLA leadership. Most notable are Zhang Gong, Zhou Yushu, Liu Anyuan, and Zhou Keyu, all now full members of the CC.<sup>17</sup> None of these officers, with the possible exception of Zhang Gong, established ties with the Yangs on the basis of extended unit affiliation. They were brought into the Yang camp largely because of recent service in the GPD or strong support for Tiananmen.<sup>18</sup>

Finally, most of the PLA's newly elected full members appear to display direct or indirect ties to either the Second or Third FA systems. These include Cao Shuangming, Gu Hui, Gu

<sup>16</sup>It should be noted that Zhang Zhen served for five years under Yang Dezhi in the early eighties as deputy director of the GSD.

<sup>17</sup>See Appendix J. Zhang Gong and Zhou Yushu are newly elected members, although Zhou was an alternate in the 13th Central Committee.

<sup>18</sup>Both Zhous are likely veterans of the Third FA system, while Liu is a probable member of the "southern" Fourth FA system. Zhang Gong has no field unit ties whatsoever, which suggests that he would be inclined to drop his factional support of Yang Baibing if his patron suffered a major decline in power.

Shanqing, Li Jing, Li Laizu, Li Wenqing, Li Xilin, Liu Huaqing, Song Qingwei, Tong Baocun, Wang Ke, Zhang Lianzhong, Zhang Meiyuan, Zhang Wannian, Zhang Zhen, Zhou Yushu, and Zhu Dunfa.<sup>19</sup> Moreover, at least seven of the newly elected full members played a major role in Tiananmen.<sup>20</sup> This suggests that Deng probably calculated that the uppermost leaders of the Second and Third FA alliance (i.e., Liu Huaqing and Zhang Zhen) needed to convey a "neutral" image toward Tiananmen, while younger officers should include a significant number of "hardliners." At the politburo level, the only civilian member with notable ties to the PLA is Zou Jiahua (newly elected). His connections are primarily with the Third FA system, as discussed in Chapter 4.

What implications do the above observations present for the assessment of the future role of the PLA in the succession struggle?<sup>21</sup> Yang Baibing's decline, combined with the strengthening of the potential alliance between the pro-reform Second and Third FA Factions (with likely support from Yang Dezhi), has significantly increased the chances for a peaceful transition under the new, more consistently pro-reform civilian party leadership. Such changes have probably reduced the likelihood that putative successors in a post-Deng setting will seek partisan military support to consolidate their positions against real or imagined opponents. The changes have also almost certainly lessened pressures for partisan military intervention in the succession process in support of either party or military leaders. In short, a basis for the emergence of a reasonably unified, pro-reform, yet still very anti-liberal successor regime may have been established.<sup>22</sup> Such a regime would likely intensify the existing trend toward accelerated economic and technological development and a more assertive brand of nationalism, particularly if relations with the United States were to decline further under the Clinton administration.

Certain major caveats to these conclusions should be kept in mind, however. The Yangs and their supporters have not been eliminated from the political equation, and the danger thus remains that they will seek to reassert their influence after the death of Deng, especially if Yang Shangkun remains healthy and active. Perhaps more significant, the personnel changes formalized by the congress have not eliminated the PLA's destabilizing structural characteristics or the fundamental tension between the priorities of order versus development in the calculations of the Chinese leadership and within Chinese society. Indeed, this tension could still become the major factor precipitating conflict within the Chinese military after the death of Deng Xiaoping, in the face of the intensifying societal pressures discussed previously in this Report. In such circumstances, a debate over the handling of the Tiananmen crisis and its aftermath could still emerge within the leadership, and thus could serve as a catalyst for social action and large-scale military intervention in politics. Moreover, the likelihood of such instability could increase over the short term if Deng were to die before

<sup>19</sup>See Chapters 4 and 5 and Appendix C for biographical information on these leaders.

<sup>20</sup>These include Cao Pengsheng, Li Wenqing, Zhu Dunfa, Zhou Yushu, Zhang Meiyuan, Zhang Gong, and perhaps Zhou Wenyuan.

<sup>21</sup>An assessment of the impact of various shifts in the leadership of China's military regions that will inevitably result from the promotion of regional officers to the center is beyond the scope of this postscript. Such changes have not yet been announced by the Beijing leadership, and a full assessment would require far more time than was available for this study.

<sup>22</sup>The chances of such a scenario emerging would be further strengthened if Chen Yun and Peng Zhen were to die before Deng, thereby most likely ensuring the more rapid replacement of Li Peng as premier by Zhu Rongji or Zou Jiahua.

both Yang Shangkun and Chen Yun. This could lead to significant, destabilizing changes in the successor leadership. In other words, many of the threats to a stable, enduring successor regime discussed in Scenario Four of this Report still hold true, particularly over the medium and long term. Regardless of the outcome, however, the key to China's political future will continue to rest in large part with the PLA.

## **Appendix A**

### **A NOTE ON SOURCES AND METHODOLOGY**

Anyone who has attempted to analyze the political dynamics of the Chinese party and military elite and their organs of rule knows that reliable and useful data are very hard to come by. The “informal,” highly personalized characteristics of the system (as reflected in the existence of contending political groupings or personal factions, for example) are often ignored (if not explicitly denied) by the Chinese government. In addition, information on the most basic aspects of governing institutions, leaders, and beliefs (e.g., organization charts describing line and staff relationships, complete listings of department personnel, detailed biographies of key individuals, and views of leading cadres concerning party-military power relationships) are usually regarded as state secrets or suppressed as potential violations of party discipline. This is especially true for the Chinese military. Thus, those features of the regime of greatest importance to our understanding of its future political evolution and overall stability are usually the least discernible to an outside analyst.

As a result, analysts often end up relying upon isolated bits of information (often in the form of rumors or unattributed and unverifiable speculations reported in the Hong Kong China-watching press or Taiwan publications) to support broad generalizations about the nature of power relationships, or the overriding features of civil-military relations. Some of these “data” are provided by seasoned journalist observers of Chinese politics, who generally maintain a high level of integrity in their work. Others are put forth by individuals working for publications struggling to stay afloat in a highly competitive environment, and are thus more prone to sensationalization and distortion in order to increase sales.

This Report is by no means immune to such problems. Reliable and sufficient data on individuals, groups or factions, organizations, and beliefs remain scarce, and hence many of the observations and conclusions presented in the analysis retain a tentative, even speculative quality. However, a deliberate attempt is made to minimize such shortcomings by:

- Basing the determination of possible factional groupings largely (although not solely) upon an analysis of career data, identifying correlations in the long-term organizational and regional affiliations of top military, state, and party leaders, rather than purely subjective and usually unconfirmable evaluations of personal relationships contained in press accounts; and
- Basing assessments of the internal workings of military and party institutions and the beliefs of military officers largely upon interviews with current and former members of those institutions, rather than official organization charts and second-hand information presented in the unofficial media.

Whenever possible, the analysis avoids using Hong Kong or Taiwan press sources, except to offer provocative hypotheses, or to present information that has been deemed highly reliable by authoritative independent sources.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>One example of reliable Hong Kong reporting is the analysis of the 1990 “reshuffle” of China’s regional leadership presented in the magazine *Contemporary (Tangtai)*, which has been highly praised by seasoned observers

Analysis of leadership backgrounds contained in this Report employs important new sources on the military and party elite, and also takes a second look at old sources, especially William Whitson's exhaustive analysis of the field army system presented in his path-breaking work, *The Chinese High Command*. Whitson's detailed description of the history of individual field army units is combined with both primary and secondary sources on the Chinese party and military leadership and its organs<sup>2</sup> and descriptions of the "normal" career paths of PLA officers provided by interviewees to offer a clearer picture of both the evolution of the field army system before and after 1949 and the long-term unit and military region affiliations of individual PLA officers and senior elder leaders. The main features of the field army system are presented in Chapter 2. Assessments of the unit and regional affiliations of individual leaders are largely found in Appendix C and the discussion of central and regional elites appearing in Chapters 4 and 5.

In most cases, official biographies of PLA officers provide only general information on the type of position held (e.g., staff officer, political officer, or commander), the type of unit or department in which an individual served (e.g., company, regiment, division, headquarters staff department, or military region command), the major military campaigns in which an individual participated (e.g., the Huai-Hai Campaign of the Chinese Civil War, or the Korean War), and the party posts held by the individual (e.g., central committee member or politburo member). Information on an officer's exact rank, unit or department, date of service for each position held, specific military region or provincial district, etc., are rarely provided by official sources. Moreover, such sources never include all postings, titles, and dates for a given officer. We obtain much of this crucial information by cross-referencing several sources, particularly *The Chinese High Command* and *Who's Who in China: Current Leaders*.

For example, Wang Chengbin, the current commander of the Beijing Military Region and a veteran of the Third Field Army system, is clearly identified by his official biography as a professional field army line officer. Although his official biography does not list his unit affiliation prior to his promotion into the ranks of the regional leadership, we are able to identify Wang as a likely veteran cadre of the 31st Corps of the Third FA by comparing specific items of career information with the unit histories contained in Whitson's work. His biography in *Who's Who* states that Wang participated in all the major Civil War campaigns of the Third

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of the PLA within the U.S. government and elsewhere. This Report makes ample use of such analysis in the discussion of China's regional leadership and organizations, in Chapters 5 and 7. A second example relates to information concerning personal relationships between key elders and members of the formal central and regional military leadership presented in various Hong Kong magazines and newspapers. Some of this "analysis" is discussed in the Report, especially when it contrasts with conclusions derived from the analysis of leadership careers. It is presented as authoritative, however, only when it can be corroborated by other sources (e.g., career-based analysis and interviews).

<sup>2</sup>These include *Who's Who in China: Current Leaders*, compiled by the Editorial Board of *Who's Who in China*, Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1989; *Directory of People's Republic of China Military Personalities*, Hong Kong: Defense Liaison Office, U.S. Consulate General, June 1991 and 1992; Klein and Clark, 1971; Harrison, 1972; John Gittings, *The Role of the Chinese Army*, London: Oxford University Press, 1967; Harvey W. Nelsen, *The Chinese Military System: An Organizational Study of the Chinese People's Liberation Army*, Boulder: Westview Press, 1977; Joffe, 1987; Richard H. Yang, ed., *China's Military: The PLA in 1990/1991*, Kaohsiung: Tai-ping Printing, 1991; and Lee, 1989. Most notable among recent Chinese sources on the leadership is a detailed compendium of the leading members of all major military units, base areas, and general commands between 1927 and 1950, entitled *Zuzhi Yangge he Geji Lingdao Chengyuan Minglu*, and published in Beijing by the Military Sciences Publishing House, September 1990. This authoritative source is used primarily to confirm the pre-1949 military postings of elder leaders presented by Whitson and other sources. Finally, in many instances, vital career information on military leaders was also supplied to the author by highly knowledgeable analysts of the PLA located in the United States and Hong Kong. Such private sources are cited, whenever possible, in the text.

FA (including the Fuzhou campaign directed at Taiwan), but did not serve in the Korean War. According to Whitson, the 31st Corps was the only Third FA unit that fought in those same campaigns and remained in Fujian during the Korean War, becoming part of the former Fuzhou Military Region. In similar fashion, an officer's career unit is sometimes identified by comparing the years of his Korean War service provided in official biographies with similar information on individual units presented in Whitson and other sources.

Of course, the identification of unit and regional affiliations in the careers of leading PLA officers does not eliminate the subjective and sometimes arbitrary element involved in determining likely factional networks. The reasons behind the formation of specific personal alliances are simply too complex to be described solely by reference to shared service in specific organizations or regions. Where possible, therefore, observations regarding unit- or region-based affiliations are complemented by information on alternative types of links derived from interviews and reliable secondary sources. Equally important, any given leader has probably served with a very large number of his surviving military and party colleagues (as well as key superiors and subordinates) in various organizations during the course of his career, thus presenting the problem of determining which career contacts may be most important in the formation of close personal relationships. Since it is impossible to read an individual's mind, the resolution of this problem must rest, albeit precariously, upon a general assessment of the relative significance of certain types of career contacts, derived from an overall understanding of the dynamics of factionalism and career advancement in China.

In this Report, five basic assumptions concerning power relationships in the Chinese system (and especially the Chinese military) are utilized as key criteria in assessing the relative importance of various career associations:<sup>3</sup>

- Enduring personal relationships among senior officers and party leaders are forged through common involvement in armed conflicts and various "crucibles of fire" such as the major campaigns of the Chinese Civil War and the Korean War.
- Common, long-term affiliations with individual military departments, units, or party organs also serve as a key foundation for the formation of enduring personal relationships, particularly among younger officers whose careers developed largely during peacetime; lateral relationships across organizations are normally of secondary importance.
- Within individual organizations or military units, authority relationships are essentially vertically structured, i.e., individuals are normally pulled up the career ladder by "patrons" higher in the structure and supported from below by subordinate supporters.
- High-level officials within a given organization or area (e.g. the commander of a military region) can usually exert decisive power over the promotion or replacement of subordinate officers within their commands when they enjoy close relationships with senior leaders at the top of the political system (e.g., Deng Xiaoping); such power often crosses field army lines.
- Within the PLA, promotion from the divisional to corps (or group army) level and then to the military region level are crucial steps in the career of every field officer; hence, an officer's superior commander or commissar at the time of such promotions (e.g., the group

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<sup>3</sup>Several of these characteristics are discussed at greater length in the text.

army and military region commander or commissar) *may* serve as the personal patron of that officer.<sup>4</sup>

These criteria are applied in a decidedly unsystematic manner, largely because information relevant to each of these features of the system is incomplete for each leader. Nevertheless, they often serve to distinguish likely primary personal relationships over secondary ones.

Information on the actual (as opposed to formal) operation of China's military command and control apparatus and system of party control, as well as the organization and function of regional recruitment and the promotion system, cannot be found in any open sources on the Chinese military. Occasionally, very partial elements of each system can be gleaned from references to specific military operations and organizations found in both official PRC sources and the unofficial Hong Kong or Taiwan press. Yet such references do not provide an overall picture, and the information presented is usually impossible to verify. This Report relies instead upon lengthy, in-depth interviews conducted in China and Hong Kong during summer and fall 1991 with a small number of current and former PLA officers to construct the overview of the command and control and recruitment/promotion systems of the PLA presented in Part Three. Most interviewees held positions in the Chinese military that allowed them to receive information on the workings of those systems. They are not identified for obvious reasons. Clearly the observations derived from such an extremely limited "dataset" cannot be regarded as definitive or authoritative. Hence, the details presented in Part Three are intended as hypotheses, to provide a basis for further analysis.

Finally, the analysis of PLA beliefs and attitudes toward issues of party control and military intervention in elite politics presented in Chapter 8 is perhaps the most tentative in nature of the three dimensions of China's politico-military system covered by this Report. Observations on the views of huge numbers of PLA officers should ideally derive from a systematic sampling of many individuals, representing all branches of the military. This is obviously not possible in China. Hence, our analysis relies primarily upon a careful weighing of information provided by interviewees, very knowledgeable observers of the PLA in China, Hong Kong, and the United States, and the more reliable Hong Kong and Taiwan publications. Again, it does not claim to be definitive; rather, it presents a hypothesis based upon a balanced assessment of available sources. Contradictory characterizations of PLA attitudes or those that rely essentially upon only one source are identified as such in the text. Areas where information is extremely scarce or entirely unavailable are also pointed out.

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<sup>4</sup>This is by no means an iron law, since key promotions above the divisional level are often determined by authorities in Beijing, as discussed in Chapter 7. However, superior unit officers can sometimes play a very important role in such advancements, as noted in the previous point.

## Appendix B

### PARTY AND MILITARY LEADERSHIP

#### TOP PARTY AND MILITARY ELDERS (in alphabetical order)

Name	Current Title	Central Party Position
Bo Yibo	Retired	Vice Chairman, CAC
Chen Yun	Retired	Chairman, CAC
Deng Xiaoping	Retired	(none)
Hong Xuezhi	Retired	(none)
Li Desheng	Retired	CAC Standing Committee
Liu Huaqing	Vice Chairman, CMC	CAC Member
Peng Zhen	Retired	(none)
Qin Jiwei	Minister of Defense	Politburo, Full Member
Wang Zhen	Vice President	(none)
Xiang Shouzhi	Retired	CAC Member
Yang Dezhi	Retired	CAC Standing Committee
Yang Shangkun	PRC President; First Vice Chairman, Party CMC	Politburo, Full Member; CCP CC, Member
You Taizhong	Retired	CAC Member
Zhang Aiping	Retired	CAC Standing Committee

#### CENTRAL PARTY AND MILITARY LEADERSHIP (in alphabetical order)

Name	Current Title	Central Party Position
Chi Haotian	Chief of the General Staff (GSD); CMC, Member	CCP CC, Full Member
Ding Henggao	Director, COSTIND	CCP CC, Full Member
He Pengfei	Director, GSD Armament Department	(none)
Jiang Zemin	General Secretary, CCP CC; Chairman, CMC	Politburo Standing Committee, Member; CCP CC, Full Member
Li Jijun	Director, CMC General Office	CCP CC, Full Member
Li Peng	Premier	Politburo Standing Committee, Member; CCP CC, Full Member
Li Ruihuan	(none)	Politburo, Standing Committee Member; CCP CC, Full Member; Member, CCP CC Secretariat



Li Tieying	State Councillor	Politburo, Full Member; CCP CC, Full Member
Li Xuge	Commander, Second Artillery	CCP CC, Full Member
Liu Anyuan	Political Commissar, Second Artillery	CCP CC, Full Member
Qiao Shi	Chairman, CCP CC Political and Legal Affairs Committee; Secretary and SC Member, CCP CC DIC; President, Party School	Politburo Standing Committee, Member; CCP CC, Full Member; Member, CCP CC Secretariat
Song Ping	(none)	Politburo, Standing Committee Member
Tian Jiyun	Vice Premier	Politburo, Full Member; CCP CC, Full Member
Wang Hai	Commander, Air Force	CCP CC, Full Member
Wang Ruilin	Secretary, DIC; Deputy Director, CCP CC General Office	CCP CC, Full Member
Wei Jinshan	Political Commissar, Navy	CCP CC, Full Member
Xu Huizi	Deputy Chief of the General Staff (GSD)	CCP CC, Full Member
Xu Xin	Deputy Chief of the GSD	CAC Member
Yang Baibing	Director, GPD; Secretary-General, CMC	CCP CC, Full Member; Member, CCP CC Secretariat
Yang Yongbin	Political Commissar, AMS	(none)
Yao Yilin	Vice Premier	Politburo, Standing Committee, Member; CCP CC, Full Member
Yu Yongbo	Deputy Director, GPD	CCP CC, Full Member
Zhang Lianzhong	Commander, Navy	CCP CC, Full Member CCP CC, Alternate Member
Zhang Zhen	Commandant and Political Commissar, National Defense University	CAC Member
Zhao Nanqi	Director, GLD; CMC, Member	CCP CC, Full Member
Zhou Keyu	Political Commissar, GLD	CCP CC, Full Member
Zhou Wenyuan	Deputy Director, GPD	CCP CC, Alternate Member
Zhu Guang	Political Commissar, Air Force	CCP CC, Full Member
Zhu Rongji	Vice-Premier	CCP CC, Alternate Member
Zou Jiahua	Vice-Premier	CCP CC, Full Member

## REGIONAL MILITARY LEADERSHIP

### PEOPLE'S ARMED POLICE (HEADQUARTERS)

Name	Current Title	Central Party Position
Zhou Yushu	Commander	CCP CC, Alternate Member
Xu Shouzheng	Political Commissar	(none)
Wang Wenli	Deputy Commander	(none)
Zuo Yinsheng	Deputy Commander	(none)
Lu Shouyan	Deputy Political Commissar	(none)
Xu Guibao	Deputy Political Commissar	(none)
Jin Renxie	Chief of Staff	(none)
An Jiaojia	Deputy Chief of Staff	(none)
Gao Wenyuan	Deputy Chief of Staff	(none)
Zhang Junqi	Deputy Chief of Staff	(none)
Li Zhiyun	Director, Political Department	(none)

### PEOPLE'S ARMED POLICE (BEIJING GENERAL UNIT)

Name	Current Title	Central Party Position
Meng Zhende	Commander	(none)
Zhang Shiai	Political Commissar	(none)
Chen Dongtian	Deputy Commander	(none)
Wang Xinghua	Deputy Commander	(none)
Zhang Changhe	Deputy Commander	(none)
Li Chongdai	Deputy Political Commissar	(none)
Li Yutian	Deputy Political Commissar	(none)
Liu Hongjun	Chief of Staff	(none)
Zhang Zicheng	Director, Political Department	(none)

### PEOPLE'S ARMED POLICE (BEIJING SECOND GENERAL UNIT)

Name	Current Title	Central Party Position
Ma Zixin	Commander	(none)
Chen Xianzhi	Political Commissar	(none)
Chen Qingzhen	Deputy Chief of Staff	(none)

**BEIJING GARRISON COMMAND**

Name	Current Title	Central Party Position
Dong Xuelin	Commander; Deputy Commander, Beijing MR	(none)
Zhang Baokang	Political Commissar	(none)
Gao Yunjiang	Deputy Commander	(none)
Qin Tao	Deputy Commander	(none)
Wang Yancheng	Deputy Political Commissar	(none)
Huang Xiangchu	Deputy Political Commissar	(none)
Gao Zongwu	Chief of Staff	(none)
Chen Jinbiao	Director, Political Department	(none)

**CENTRAL GUARD BUREAU**

Name	Current Title	Central Party Position
Yang Dezhong	Director	CCP CC, Full Member

**BEIJING MILITARY REGION****Regional Command**

Name	Current Title	Central Party Position
Wang Chengbin	Commander	CCP CC, Full Member
Zhang Gong	Political Commissar	(none)
Li Laizhu	Deputy Commander	(none)
Zou Yuqi	Deputy Commander	(none)
Yao Xian	Deputy Commander; Commander, Regional Air Force	(none)
Dong Xuelin	Deputy Commander; Commander, Beijing Garrison	(none)
Wang Fuyi	Deputy Political Commissar	(none)
Chen Peimin	Deputy Political Commissar	(none)
Huang Yunqiao	Chief of Staff	(none)
Wu Shuangzhan	Deputy Chief of Staff	(none)
Cao Heqing	Director, Political Department	(none)

**Group Armies**

Name	Current Title	Central Party Position
<b>27th GA (Hebei Province)</b>		
Huang Xincheng	Commander	CCP CC, Full Member
Zhu Zengquan	Political Commissar	(none)
<b>24th GA (Hebei Province)</b> (no information on commander or political commissar)		
<b>28th GA (Shanxi Province)</b>		
Tang Liehui	Commander	(none)
Guo Weixin	Political Commissar	(none)
<b>38th GA (Hebei Province)</b>		
Zhang Meiyuan	Commander	(none)
Wu Runzhong	Political Commissar	(none)
<b>63rd GA (Shanxi Province)</b>		
Zang Wenqing	Commander	(none)
Zhang Qiuxiang	Political Commissar	(none)
<b>65th GA (Hebei Province)</b>		
Liu Yinchao	Commander	(none)
Tian Shugen	Political Commissar	(none)

**SHENYANG MILITARY REGION****Regional Command**

Name	Current Title	Central Party Position
Liu Jingsong	Commander	CCP CC, Full Member
Song Keda	Political Commissar	CCP CC, Alternate Member
Shi Baoyuan	Deputy Commander	(none)
Cao Shuangming	Deputy Commander; Commander, Regional Air Force	(none)
Tong Baocun	Deputy Commander	(none)
Dai Xuejiang	Deputy Political Commissar	(none)
Ai Weiren	Deputy Political Commissar	(none)
Wu Jiamin	Chief of Staff	(none)
Zong Shunliu	Deputy Chief of Staff	CCP CC, Alternate Member
Zhao Shufeng	Deputy Chief of Staff	(none)
Huang Zaiyu	Deputy Chief of Staff	(none)
Huang Jianhong	Director, Political Department	(none)

**Group Armies**

Name	Current Title	Central Party Position
16th GA (Jilin Province)		
Ma Fengtong	Commander	(none)
Xu Caihou	Political Commissar	(none)
23rd GA (Heilongjiang Province)		
Wu Yuqian	Commander	(none)
Dong Yisheng	Political Commissar	(none)
39th GA (Liaoning Province)		
Luo Youli	Commander	(none)
Tan Naida	Political Commissar	(none)
40th GA		
He Daoquan	Commander	CCP CC, Alternate Member
Zheng Shunzhou	Political Commissar	(none)
64th GA		
Ge Zhenfeng	Commander	(none)
Zhang Chuanmiao	Political Commissar	(none)

**JINAN MILITARY REGION****Regional Command**

Name	Current Title	Central Party Position
Zhang Wannian	Commander	CCP CC, Alternate Member
Song Qingwei	Political Commissar	(none)
Zhang Zhijian	Deputy Commander	(none)
Qu Zhenmou	Deputy Commander;	(none)
	Commander, North Sea Fleet	
Lin Jigui	Deputy Commander;	(none)
	Commander, Regional Air Force	
Yan Zhuo	Deputy Commander	(none)
Qu Jining	Deputy Political Commissar	(none)
Cai Renshan	Deputy Political Commissar	(none)
Yang Guoping	Chief of Staff	(none)
Yang Xizhen	Deputy Chief of Staff	(none)
He Shanfu	Deputy Chief of Staff	(none)
Jiang Futang	Director, Political Department	(none)

**Group Armies**

Name	Current Title	Central Party Position
20th GA (Henan Province)		
Ding Shouyue	Commander	(none)
(no information on political commissar)		
26th GA (Shandong Province)		
(no information on commander)		
Liu Shutian	Political Commissar	(none)
54th GA (Henan Province)		
Liang Guanglie	Commander	CCP CC, Alternate Member
Zhang Wentai	Political Commissar	(none)
67th GA (Shandong Province)		
Shen Zhaoji	Commander	(none)
Du Tiehuan	Political Commissar	(none)

**NANJING MILITARY REGION****Regional Command**

Name	Current Title	Central Party Position
Gu Hui	Commander	CCP CC, Alternate Member
Shi Yuxiao	Political Commissar	CCP CC, Full Member
Zhang Taiheng	Deputy Commander	(none)
Guo Tao	Deputy Commander	(none)
Jiang Yutian	Deputy Commander; Commander, Regional Air Force	(none)
Guo Xizhang	Deputy Commander	(none)
Wang Yongming	Deputy Political Commissar	(none)
Pei Jiuzhou	Deputy Political Commissar.	(none)
Zhang Zongde	Chief of Staff	(none)
Zheng Bingqing	Deputy Chief of Staff	(none)
Pei Huailiang	Deputy Chief of Staff	(none)
Lan Baojing	Director, Political Department	(none)

**Group Armies**

Name	Current Title	Central Party Position
1st GA (Zhejiang Province)		
Wu Quanxu	Commander	(none)
Wang Tongzhuo	Political Commissar	(none)
12th GA (Jiangsu Province)		
Chen Xitao	Commander	(none)
Wen Zongren	Political Commissar	(none)
31st GA (Fujian Province)		
Liu Lunxian	Commissar	(none)
Ren Huancai	Political Commissar	(none)

**GUANGZHOU MILITARY REGION****Regional Command**

Name	Current Title	Central Party Position
Zhu Dunfa	Commander	(none)
Zhang Zhongxian	Political Commissar	CCP CC, Full Member
Li Xinliang	Deputy Commander	CCP CC, Full Member
Li Xilin	Deputy Commander	(none)
Gao Zhenjia	Deputy Commander; Deputy Commander, South Sea Fleet	(none)
Liu Heqiao	Deputy Commander; Commander, Regional Air Force	(none)
Gao Tianzheng	Deputy Political Commissar	(none)
Liu Xinzeng	Deputy Political Commissar	(none)
Chen Xianhua	Chief of Staff	(none)
Bi Zifeng	Deputy Chief of Staff	(none)
Li Qianyuan	Deputy Chief of Staff	CCP CC, Full Member
Song Wenhan	Deputy Chief of Staff	(none)
Fang Zuqi	Director, Political Department	(none)

**Group Armies**

Name	Current Title	Central Party Position
41st GA (Guangxi Province)		
Gong Gucheng	Commander	(none)
Liu Yuanjie	Political Commissar	(none)
42nd GA (Guangdong Province)		
Wen Yuzhu	Commander	(none)
Lei Mingqiu	Political Commissar	CCP CC, Full Member
15th Airborne Army (Hubei Province)		
Jing Xueqin	Commander	(none)
Zhu Yongqing	Political Commissar	(none)



**CHENGDU MILITARY REGION****Regional Command**

Name	Current Title	Central Party Position
Li Jiulong	Commander	CCP CC, Full Member
Gu Shanqing	Political Commissar	(none)
Liao Xilong	Deputy Commander	(none)
Ma Bingchen	Deputy Commander	(none)
Xie Decai	Deputy Commander; Commander, Regional Air Force	(none)
Jiang Hongquan	Deputy Commander	CCP CC, Full Member
Wang Yongning	Deputy Political Commissar	(none)
Shao Nong	Deputy Political Commissar	(none)
Tao Bojun	Chief of Staff	(none)
Xu Zejun (?)	Deputy Chief of Staff	(none)
Yang Anzhong (?)	Deputy Chief of Staff	(none)
Wei Zhaosheng	Deputy Chief of Staff	(none)
Zhang Shuyun	Deputy Chief of Staff	(none)
Zhang Changshun	Deputy Chief of Staff	(none)
Zheng Xianbin	Director, Political Department	(none)

**Group Armies**

Name	Current Title	Central Party Position
13th GA (Sichuan Province)		
Chen Shijun	Commander	CCP CC, Alternate Member
Xiao Huaishu	Political Commissar	(none)
14th GA (Yunnan Province)		
Wang Zuxun	Commander	(none)
Chen Peizhong	Political Commissar	(none)

**LANZHOU MILITARY REGION****Regional Command**

Name	Current Title	Central Party Position
Fu Quanyou	Commander	CCP CC, Full Member
Cao Pengsheng	Political Commissar	(none)
Wang Ke	Deputy Commander; Commander, Xinjiang Military District	(none)
Sun Jinghua	Deputy Commander; Commander, Regional Air Force	(none)
Chen Chao	Deputy Commander	(none)
Gong Yongfeng	Deputy Political Commissar	(none)
Wang Maorun	Deputy Political Commissar	(none)
Chi Yunxiu	Chief of Staff	(none)
Liang Peizhen	Deputy Chief of Staff	(none)
Liu Yuzhai	Deputy Chief of Staff	(none)
Kong Zhao wen	Director, Political Department	(none)

**Group Armies**

Name	Current Title	Central Party Position
21st GA (Shaanxi Province)		
Qian Shugen	Commander	CCP CC, Alternate Member
Li Baoxiang	Political Commissar	(none)
47h GA (Shaaxi Province)		
Guo Boxiong	Commander	(none)
Zhou Yongshun	Political Commissar	(none)

## Appendix C

### BIOGRAPHIES OF REGIONAL MILITARY LEADERS

#### THE BEIJING MILITARY REGION

##### Regional Command

Commander **Wang Chengbin** (b.1928)<sup>1</sup> is a professional combat commander from Shandong, with extensive service in the Third FA system and East China. He was apparently not involved in the Tiananmen crisis, despite at least one report to the contrary.<sup>2</sup> Wang participated in all the major Civil War campaigns of the Third FA (including the Fuzhou campaign directed at Taiwan), but did not serve in the Korean War. This suggests that he was probably a cadre of the 31st Corps, which fought in the same campaigns and remained in Fujian during the early fifties, becoming part of the former Fuzhou Military Region. Fuzhou became a bastion of Third FA strength during the fifties and sixties, along with the Jinan and Nanjing MRs, and was absorbed by the latter region in 1985. Wang served in a series of leading posts at the battalion, regimental, divisional, and corps levels, eventually becoming a deputy corps commander. He then entered the PLA Military Academy. After graduation in 1981, he was appointed president of Nanchang Ground Forces School. He became a deputy commander of the Nanjing Military Region in 1985, when the Fuzhou MR was abolished, and commander of the Beijing MR in 1990. He is a full central committee member.

Political Commissar **Zhang Gong** (b.1935) is a veteran of the Beijing Military Region. He has held a series of political posts in the regional command headquarters since joining the party in 1961, beginning as office secretary within the political division of the regional logistics department. By 1982, he had become the director of the organization division of the regional political department. From that post, he was promoted to political department director, in 1985, and then to political commissar during the 1990 reshuffles, jumping one level. He is not a member of the party central committee.

Chief of Staff **Huang Yunqiao** was appointed to his post in early 1991, having served previously as deputy chief of staff. He is not a member of the party central committee. No other information is available on his career.

Deputy Commander and concurrent Beijing Garrison Commander **Dong Xuelin** took his post in the 1990 reshuffles, replacing Yan Tongmao (b.1922), who was almost certainly removed because of advanced age. Dong was commander of the nearby Hebei Military District, where he was particularly active in directing militia work. He is almost certainly a veteran of the region. His appointment as regional deputy commander in charge of the Beijing Garrison probably resulted from the central leadership's desire to apply techniques used in main-

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<sup>1</sup>Birthdates are provided when available.

<sup>2</sup>One Hong Kong newspaper has stated that Wang personally led soldiers into Beijing during the crisis, but no other source on PLA leadership participation in Tiananmen confirms this assertion. See *SCMP*, May 29, 1990, p. 9, in *FBIS-CHI*, May 29, 1990, p. 35.

taining social order through the provincial militia and reserves to those units charged with the same task in the capital.<sup>3</sup> He is not a member of the party central committee.

Deputy Commander **Li Laizhu** (b.1932) has held his post since mid-1985 and has served in the region since at least the mid-seventies. He apparently began his military career with elements of the Second FA system, since he participated in all the major Civil War campaigns of that field army, including the conquest of Southwest China. He did not serve in Korea, which suggests that he remained in the southwest during the fifties, where virtually all non-participant units of the former Second FA units were located. Li entered the PLA Military and Political Academy after serving in a series of political, staff, and commander posts at the battalion, regimental, and divisional levels. He was probably transferred to Beijing after graduation in 1976, where he held posts in the regional infantry school and the Shijiazhuang Ground Forces School, prior to his promotion to his current post. He is not a member of the party central committee.

Deputy Commander **Yao Xian** (b.1927) was appointed during the 1990 reshuffles from within the region. He is concurrently commander of the Beijing Military Region Air Force. A career air force officer and fighter pilot, Yao held a series of command posts in the PLAAF before becoming a deputy commander of the regional AF in 1983. Given his strong air force credentials, he may be more closely tied to Wang Hai's supporters than to anyone within the Beijing Military Region. His age suggests that he will probably retire soon. He is not a member of the party central committee.

Deputy Commander **Zou Yuqi** (b.1932) was also promoted during the 1990 reshuffles, again from within the military region. He had been regional chief of staff since 1985. Zou joined the PLA after 1949, and was first identified as a staff officer within a corps headquarters during the late sixties. After a long period (1969–78) as deputy chief and chief of a corps-level operational training department, Zou began a relatively rapid rise through a series of staff posts at the divisional and corps levels, suggesting that he is a strong supporter of military reform and probably also an associate of Qin Jiwei. He is not a member of the party central committee.

Deputy Political Commissar **Chen Peimin** (b.1927) has held his post since 1985. He reportedly participated in Tiananmen as a senior political officer supervising regional units. Chen has a long, distinguished career as a political commissar among combat units associated with the Fourth FA system in North China, including a three-year stint in the Korean War. He joined the Eighth Route Army in 1943 and served as a company political instructor of the Northeast Democratic Allied Army and a deputy section chief of a regimental political department of the Fourth FA in the late forties. During this period, he participated in the major Civil War campaigns of the Fourth FA in the north and northeast. He was then sent to Korea, where he served in the headquarters of a corps political department. After returning to China in 1953, Chen held a series of posts in the fifties and sixties as a leading political officer at the regimental and divisional levels, and also attended the General Higher Infantry School, graduating in 1957. He then served as a division political commissar and a director of a corps political department during most of the seventies, and as a vice minister of the State Physical Culture and Sports Commission (SPCSC), from 1977–80. Chen was identified

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<sup>3</sup>*Tangtai*, Notes, pp. 16–17, makes this point.

as a deputy political commissar of the Fourth FA's 38th Corps in 1983, which suggests that his entire field career was probably spent with that unit. The 38th was deployed to Korea during the time of Chen's service in the conflict, it participated in the northeastern and northern military campaigns of the Civil War, and was deployed to the northeast after Korea. All these activities coincide with Chen's career.

Both Chen's apparently extensive connection with Beijing and his Tiananmen involvement suggest a possible link with Yang Baibing, although he is probably too senior to owe his present position to Yang. In any event, Chen's service as vice minister (and concurrently political department director) of the innocuous SPCSC suggests that he is not a key political player in the military. It also suggests that he may be allied with retired PLA elder Wang Meng, since Wang was a former political commissar of the 38th Corps and minister of the SPCSC in the late seventies. Regardless of his personal ties, however, Chen's advanced age may explain why he was not promoted to the top commissar slot in 1990. He is probably at the end of his career. He is not a member of the party central committee.

Deputy Political Commissar **Wang Fuyi** was another 1990 appointment from within the region. He became a deputy commissar after service in the Tiananmen crisis as political commissar of the 38th Group Army and no doubt distinguished himself by ensuring that the 38th performed well after its commander was relieved of command. This suggests that Wang is probably a supporter of Yang Baibing. He is not a member of the party central committee.

Political Department Director **Cao Heqing** was also promoted to his current post during the 1990 reshuffles because of Tiananmen service. He was previously political commissar of the 65th Group Army, based in Northwest Hebei. This factor also suggests a connection with Yang Baibing. He is not a member of the party central committee.

Deputy Chief of Staff **Wu Shuangzhan** was promoted to his current post in early 1991 from within the region, because of Tiananmen service as a deputy commander of the 24th Group Army. The 24th has seen many of its officers and men transferred into the Beijing PAP. Wu is not a member of the party central committee.

### Group Army Commands

Commander and political commissar of the 24th Group Army are not known.

Commander **Huang Xinsheng** of the 27th Group Army was promoted from deputy commander of the same unit during the 1990 reshuffles. Political Commissar **Zhu Zengquan** was promoted from political department director of the same unit in June 1989. Both men served with Martial Law Forces during the Tiananmen crisis.

Commander **Tang Liehui** of the 28th Group Army was promoted from deputy commander of the 65th Group Army, Beijing Military Region, during the 1990 reshuffles. Political Commissar **Guo Weixin** was promoted from an unknown unit during the 1990 reshuffles.

Commander **Zhang Meiyuan** of the 38th Group Army was probably promoted from deputy commander of the same unit immediately following Tiananmen, after serving as acting commander of the 38th when its former commander was replaced during the crisis. Zhang is a professional unit commander and veteran of the 38th Group Army. He formerly commanded the 113th Mechanized Division of that unit. This extensive service as a commander of the

38th probably links Zhang with Qin Jiwei. Political Commissar **Wu Runzhong** was promoted from deputy political commissar of the same unit during the 1990 reshuffles.

Commander **Zang Wenqing** of the 63rd Group Army was transferred from commander of the 65th Group Army, Beijing Military Region, during the 1990 reshuffles. He commanded troops of the 65th Group Army as part of the Martial Law Forces in Beijing in 1989. Political Commissar **Zhang Qiuxiang** was promoted from political department director of the same unit during the 1990 reshuffles. He formerly served as political commissar of an unidentified regiment of the Beijing Garrison Command.

Commander **Liu Yinchao** of the 65th Group Army was promoted from chief of staff of the Shanxi Military District during the 1990 reshuffles. Political Commissar **Tian Shugen** was promoted from political department director of an unidentified group army, Beijing Military Region, during the 1990 reshuffles.

## THE SHENYANG MILITARY REGION

### Regional Command

Commander **Liu Jingsong** (b.1933) is almost certainly a long-term veteran of the region. He began his military career as a platoon leader in a training battalion of the First Mechanized Division in 1954. He then rose through a series of staff positions in operations and training in the fifties and sixties to become deputy commander of an AA regiment in 1969. This period included service in Vietnam. Liu became head of a corps training unit in 1971, probably utilizing his Vietnam experience. After that, his career apparently took off. By 1980, he had risen through various leading posts at the regimental and divisional levels to become a divisional commander within the 64th Corps, part of the Fifth FA system. Within another three years, he had become commander of the 64th. He was named regional commander in 1985. In addition to his professional field unit experience, Liu has also published several articles on aspects of military operations and training. Liu has been a full member of the party central committee since the 12th Party Congress in 1982.

Political Commissar **Song Keda** (b.1928) is also a veteran of the Shenyang MR. He began his military career as a member of a regimental propaganda team in the New Fourth Army, followed by company and regimental posts as a political officer in the Fourth FA system. After participating in major battles waged by the Fourth FA and service in the Korean War, Song held a series of commissar posts at the regimental and divisional levels within the 39th Corps based in Liaoning. By 1983, he had become political commissar of that unit, serving alongside Commander Xu Huizi, now deputy chief of the GSD. Song was promoted to deputy political commissar of the region in 1985. He became political commissar in 1990. Song is an alternate member of the central committee.

Chief of Staff **Wu Jiamin** was promoted to his current post during the 1990 reshuffles, almost certainly because of his meritorious service during Tiananmen, when he was commanding the 40th Group Army. A vanguard regiment of the 40th, most likely under Wu's command, marched on Tiananmen Square from the south in the early morning of June 4. He is not a member of the party central committee.

Deputy Commander **Shi Baoyuan** (b.1937) has held his current post since 1985. He is a relatively young professional field commander with long-term experience within the region

as an armored officer. After graduating from the PLA First Tank School in the mid-fifties, he rose steadily through leading posts in armored units. Shi was chief of staff of a mechanized division in 1978. He became a deputy corps commander in 1984, after relatively rapid promotions through the regimental and divisional levels in the early eighties. This quick advance, plus his jump from deputy corps commander to deputy regional commander in 1985, suggest that Shi is probably a talented pro-reform officer with support in Beijing. He is not a member of the party central committee.

Deputy Commander and concurrent Military Region Air Force Commander **Cao Shuangming** (b.1929) is a professional PLAAF officer and accomplished combat pilot. He began his career as a junior infantry officer in the Second FA system, prior to graduation from Air Force Aviation School and service as a fighter pilot during the early fifties. After flying in combat during the Korean War and the Taiwan Straits Crisis, he held a series of unit PLAAF leadership posts at the regimental, divisional, and corps levels, probably within the Shenyang region. He became deputy commander of the Shenyang Military Region Air Force in 1974, and was promoted to commander in 1983. He also became a regional deputy commander in 1987. He is not a member of the party central committee.

Deputy Commander **Tong Baocun** was one of the few leading regional officers promoted into Shenyang from another region during the 1990 reshuffles. He was previously commander of the 26th Group Army of the Jinan Military Region in Shandong, and had served as a deputy from Jinan to the 7th National People's Congress in 1988. Tong has combat experience in both the Korean War and along the Sino-Vietnam border, but little else is known about his earlier career. He is probably a veteran of Jinan, however. He is not a member of the party central committee.

Deputy Political Commissar **Dai Xuejiang** (b.1930) was promoted from regional political department director to his current post in the 1990 reshuffles. His military career began as a political officer in the Third FA system, where he participated in major Third FA campaigns of the Civil War. After service with the East China Military Command, he was sent to Korea, where he held posts as secretary of a division political department and a battalion political instructor, probably still within units of the former Third FA. After returning home, he rose steadily through a series of commissar posts within the Shenyang MR, at the divisional, corps, and regional levels, becoming regional political department director in 1988, when he attained the rank of major general. Dai's career strongly suggests that he is a veteran cadre of the 23rd Corps, which later formed the core of Shenyang's 23rd Group Army. The 23rd was the only former Third FA unit deployed to Korea that was subsequently based in Northeast China. Dai is not a member of the party central committee.

Deputy Political Commissar **Ai Weiren** (b.1932) was also promoted into Shenyang from another region. He is not a total stranger to the northeast, however, since he is apparently one of the few "southern" Fourth FA veterans to be transferred back into the area after early service there. He began his military career in a regimental political department of the Northeast FA and subsequently participated during the Civil War in the Fourth FA's Manchurian campaigns. After service in the Korean War as a political officer at the company, regimental, and battalion levels, he continued his service in regional units, probably in the south or southwest. He apparently held several commissar posts at the corps and group army level in Chengdu. One of these posts was in the 13th Corps, later the 13th GA, where he served as political commissar until 1988. He was transferred to Shenyang from the

Chengdu Military Region during the 1990 reshuffles, where he had held the same regional deputy political commissar post. He is not a member of the party central committee.

Political Department Director **Huang Jianhong** served with Commander Liu Jingsong in the 64th Corps until mid-1985 as a deputy commissar. He was then appointed political commissar of the Dalian Army Academy in the Shenyang MR. He assumed his present office in mid-1990. He is not a member of the party central committee.

Deputy Chief of Staff **Zong Shunliu** (b.1941) was appointed to his current post during the 1990 reshuffles, after a stint within the GLD in Beijing. He graduated from the Yangzhou Polytechnical School and served as a technician in Jilin before joining the PLA in 1961. Between 1966–80, Zong held a series of staff posts at the company and regimental levels within the Shenyang MR, eventually becoming commander of an artillery regiment in the late seventies. His last post in the region was as chief of staff of the 39th Corps, led by Commander Xu Huizi and Political Commissar Song Keda. Zong graduated from the PLA Military Academy in 1982, and was promoted to Beijing to serve as GLD deputy director in 1985, before returning to Shenyang. His career marks him as one of the “new breed” of technically educated, young regional officers with experience in the central departments and an academy education. Zong was named an alternate member of the CCP Central Committee in 1987.

Almost nothing is known about Deputy Chief of Staff **Zhao Shufeng** prior to his current appointment during the 1990 reshuffles. However, he was identified as the deputy commandant and commandant of the Dalian Army Academy in 1986 and 1987, which suggests that he is also a Shenyang cadre.<sup>4</sup> In the latter post his commissar partner was Huang Jianhong. He is not a member of the party central committee.

Deputy Chief of Staff **Huang Zaiyu**, also believed to be a 1990 appointee, has served in the Shenyang MR since the mid-1970s, when his unit, the 68th Corps, was relocated to Jilin from Shandong. In 1985 the 68th was reorganized into the Chifeng Garrison which, though situated in Inner Mongolia, is under the Shenyang MR. Huang, as commander of the 68th, became commander of the garrison. He is not a member of the party central committee.

### Group Army Commands

Commander **Ma Fengtong** of the 16th Group Army has held his current post since at least October 1986. His previous posts are unknown. Political Commissar **Xu Caihou** was promoted from political department director of the same unit during the 1990 reshuffles.

Commander **Wu Yuqian** of the 23rd Group Army was transferred from commander of the 67th Group Army, Jinan Military Region, during the 1990 reshuffles. Wu is the only known case of a group army commander being transferred across military regions after Tiananmen. He served as commander of an unidentified division of the Jinan Military Region in the early eighties and is thus almost certainly a veteran of that region. However, Wu is very young. He was only 39 years old when he served as a division commander in 1982. Political Commissar **Dong Yisheng** has held his current post since at least 1985.

<sup>4</sup>Ellis Melvin, personal correspondence.



Commander **Luo Youli** of the 39th Group Army was promoted from deputy commander of the same unit during the 1990 reshuffles. Political Commissar **Tan Naida** was transferred from political commissar of the 64th Group Army, Shenyang Military Region, during the 1990 reshuffles.

Commander **He Daoquan** of the 40th Group Army was transferred from commander of the 23rd Group Army, Shenyang Military Region, during the 1990 reshuffles. He is a veteran of the region with combat experience during the Sino-Soviet border clashes of March 1969. He serves as an alternate on the party central committee. Political Commissar **Zheng Shunzhou** has held his current post since at least April 1988.

Commander **Ge Zhenfeng** of the 64th Group Army was promoted from chief of staff of the same unit during the 1990 reshuffles. Political Commissar **Zhang Chuanmiao** was promoted from deputy political commissar of the same unit during the 1990 reshuffles. He had served with units of the 64th during the Tiananmen crisis. Zhang is actually a veteran political officer of the 23rd Group Army, however.

## THE JINAN MILITARY REGION

### Regional Command

Commander **Zhang Wannian** (b.1928) is a career field officer of the Fourth FA system with a distinguished combat record from the Civil War period. He was almost certainly a long-term veteran of the 41st Corps, a unit of the 12th Army based in South China after 1949, and thus a member of the "southern" Fourth FA contingent. During the forties, Zhang held leading posts at the company and regimental levels within the Northeast Democratic United Army and the Northeast Field Army. He participated in most of the major campaigns of the Fourth FA, including the Peiping-Tientsin and Guangxi campaigns, and reportedly excelled in the famous Tashan Blocking Action of the 41st Corps, in 1948. He did not serve in Korea, however, since the 41st was one of three Fourth FA corps that remained in Guangdong for coastal defense.<sup>5</sup> Zhang held various posts at the regimental level in the fifties (including deputy regimental commander and chief of staff), almost certainly with the 41st Corps. He attained the rank of regimental commander after graduating from the Basic Department of the PLA Military Academy in 1961, and commanded the Tashan Hero Regiment (123rd Division, 41st Corps) from 1961–66. Sometime during the late sixties, however, Zhang was transferred to the nearby 43rd Corps, also of the "southern" Fourth FA contingent. This unit was sent north to the Wuhan MR in 1968, during the height of the Cultural Revolution. The Wuhan area was embroiled in considerable armed conflict during that time, and Zhang was probably shifted out of his original unit to strengthen leadership at the division level. He served as division commander within the 43rd Corps from 1968–78, and ultimately became corps commander in 1981. Zhang became deputy commander of the Wuhan MR in 1982 and took the same post in the Guangzhou MR when the former region was abolished and the 43rd disbanded in 1985. He was promoted to regional commander two years later, replacing You Taizhong. Zhang was then laterally transferred to Jinan in 1990. He has been an alternate member of the party central committee since 1982.

<sup>5</sup>The other two units were the 43rd and 55th Corps. See Whitson, 1973, p. 328.

Political Commissar **Song Qingwei** (b.1929) is a career political officer and organization cadre. He emerged from the Third FA system and spent most of his post-1949 career in the former Fuzhou MR. After serving as company political instructor with the East China Field Army at the end of the Civil War, he became an organization department leader at the regimental level, eventually attaining a top post in the same department within Fuzhou in 1960. He did not serve in Korea. In the sixties and seventies, Song served in a series of commissar posts within field units, almost certainly still within the same command. He became political commissar of the 31st Corps in 1983, when it was still part of the Fuzhou MR, and then moved north to become deputy political commissar in Jinan in 1985, when Fuzhou was absorbed by the Nanjing MR. He was promoted to regional political commissar in 1987. Song is not a member of the party central committee.

Little is known about Chief of Staff **Yang Guoping**. He was brought into the region from the Shenyang MR during the 1990 reshuffles, where he had served as regional deputy chief of staff. He is not a member of the party central committee.

Deputy Commander **Zhang Zhijian** (b.1934) is a veteran of the region. A career staff officer with expertise in operations and training work, he held a series of leading staff posts at the divisional, corps, and regional levels in the sixties and seventies, after service in the Korean War. He then served as a division and corps commander in the early eighties before assuming his current post in 1985. Zhang led Jinan units to the Yunnan border in 1985 on a combat mission which lasted for about a year. His background suggests possible associations with Yang Dezhi and, on a much lower level, with Li Jiulong, a Jinan veteran of the Fourth FA system, commander of the region between 1985–90 and now commander of the Chengdu MR. A less likely associate could be Zhou Keyu. He is not a member of the party central committee.

Deputy Commander and concurrent North Fleet Commander **Qu Zhenmou** (b.1930) is a Shandong native with career roots in the Third FA system and long-term naval experience, apparently in the Jinan area. He held a series of top field positions (including naval captain from 1959–66, following graduation from Navy Command School) before becoming deputy chief of staff and then deputy commander of the North Sea Fleet. He eventually became commander of the same fleet as a result of the 1990 reshuffles, following a long stint (from 1981) as deputy commander of the South Sea Fleet. Qu is not a member of the party central committee.

Deputy Commander and concurrent Military Region Air Force Commander **Lin Jigui** (b.1930) is also a Shandong native. He is a former fighter pilot and career PLA AF cadre with extensive service within regional field units, in Lanzhou and possibly in Jinan. From 1974 to 1983, he was a deputy commander of the Lanzhou MR Air Force. He is not a member of the party central committee.

Deputy Commander **Yan Zhuo** is almost certainly a veteran Jinan cadre. He was promoted to his current post during the 1990 reshuffles after serving as deputy commander and commander of the Shandong Military District, where he carried out militia reform. This is a somewhat unusual career path for a leading regional officer, since the district command is often viewed as a retirement ground for relatively undistinguished officers. He did not participate in Tiananmen, but he often writes pro-reform articles for *Jiefangjun Bao*. It is possible

that someone very high up is serving as his patron, and recognized his achievements while in Shandong. However, Yan is not a member of the party central committee.

Deputy Political Commissar **Qu Jining** was promoted from his previous post as political commissar of the 63rd Group Army in the Beijing Military Region. This was almost certainly because of his participation in Tiananmen. No other information is available on his career background. He is not a member of the party central committee.

Deputy Political Commissar **Cai Renshan** was promoted internally during the 1990 reshuffles from his previous post as political department deputy director. Cai serves concurrently as the secretary of the MR Discipline Inspection Committee. No other information is available on his background. He is not a member of the party central committee.

Political Department Director **Jiang Futang** has held his post since late 1985. He has been in the Jinan MR since as early as 1973, when he served as a regimental political officer. By 1983, Jiang had risen to political commissar of the 26th Corps. He is not a member of the party central committee.

Almost nothing is known about Deputy Chief of Staff **Yang Xizhen** and little about Deputy Chief of Staff **He Shanfu**. The former has held his post since late 1986, while the latter was appointed in early 1991. He Shanfu is originally from the 54th GA, which was reorganized from the 54th Corps of the Wuhan MR and placed under the command of Jinan in 1985. He fought in the 1979 counterattack against Vietnam as a regimental commander. By 1983 he had become corps chief of staff, at the age of 46. Neither Yang nor He is a member of the party central committee.

### **Group Army Commands**

Commander **Ding Shouyue** of the 20th Group Army was promoted in 1990 from deputy commander of either the 20th or the 54th GA in Henan. The current political commissar of the 20th Group Army is not known. Until recently, **Liu Guofu** had held the post. He was promoted from political commissar, logistics department, Jinan Military Region, in early 1991. Liu had also been a deputy political commissar of the Shandong Military District, and was reassigned to the MD as political commissar in 1992.

Commander of the 26th Group Army is not known. Political Commissar **Liu Shutian** has held his current post since at least November 1988. His previous post was political department director of the same unit.

Commander **Liang Guanglie** of the 54th Group Army was transferred from commander, 20th Group Army, Jinan Military Region, during the 1990 reshuffles. He is an alternate member of the party central committee. Political Commissar **Zhang Wentai** was political commissar of the 26th GA from 1985 to 1988. He has held his current post since at least June 1988.

Commander **Shen Zhaoji** of the 67th Group Army was previously commander of the Qingdao Garrison. Political Commissar **Du Tiehuan** has held his current post since at least May 1989. He was most likely promoted from political commissar of a subordinate division, in which capacity he had fought on the Yunnan front in 1985.

## THE NANJING MILITARY REGION

### Regional Command

Commander **Gu Hui** (b.1930) is a native of Liaoning and another member of the "southern" Fourth FA contingent. He began his military service with the Fourth FA system in the northeast. He then fought with the 42nd Corps across China, ending in Guangdong. Gu returned to the north for a brief period to serve as a regimental staff officer for operations and training during the Korean War, but was back in the Guangdong MR as soon as the conflict ended. He was then promoted through various leading staff and commander posts within the 42nd Corps, becoming a deputy division commander in 1969, a division commander in 1978, and finally commander of the 42nd in 1983. He was shifted out of the region to become a deputy commander of the Jinan MR in 1985 (serving under fellow Fourth FA veteran Li Jiu-long), and was promoted to Nanjing MR commander in 1990. Gu was named an alternate member of the party central committee in 1987.

Political Commissar **Shi Yuxiao** (b.1933) is a veteran of the former Wuhan MR and the Nanjing MR. He probably rose to his current leadership post as a veteran cadre of the First Corps. The First Corps was stationed in the Beijing and Wuhan MRs during the late fifties and sixties and then moved to the Nanjing MR in 1974. After service in Korea as a political officer in a military security unit, Shi was promoted through various leading political posts at the company, battalion, regimental, and divisional levels, almost certainly within units of the First Corps. He was named a deputy division political commissar in 1979. He had become the political commissar of the First Corps by 1983. It then fought on the Yunnan front the following year, led by Shi and Commander Fu Quanyou. By 1985, Shi was a deputy political commissar at the MR level. Two years later, he was elected a full member of the 13th Central Committee from Nanjing, prior to his promotion to regional political commissar during the 1990 reshuffles. Shi was named a full member of the party central committee in 1987.

Little is known about Chief of Staff **Zhang Zongde**, but he is probably a veteran of the region. Zhang served for many years within the former Fuzhou Military Region facing Taiwan, and was commander of the Fujian Military District when he was promoted to the MR headquarters during the 1990 reshuffles. His background suggests an association with Xiang Shouzhi. However, his likely long service in Fuzhou also suggests links with other current and former regional leaders who served in that region before it was absorbed by Nanjing, including Wang Chengbin, Song Qingwei, and Fu Kuiqing. He is not a member of the party central committee.

Deputy Commander **Guo Tao** (b.1927) is an older veteran of the Second FA system with extensive service in Nanjing, probably beginning after his return from the Korean War. Guo's early PLA career strongly suggests a close association with Xiang Shouzhi, perhaps within the former 15th Corps. He served as a company political instructor in the Shanxi-Hebei-Shandong-Henan Area command in 1946 when Xiang was a deputy detachment commander in the same area, and as a battalion political instructor of the Second FA in 1949, when Xiang was a division commander and concurrently division political commissar. Both men participated in the major campaigns of the Second FA against the Nationalists, and both served within Second FA units in Korea at the division level. Guo then held a series of staff and commander positions, most likely within the Nanjing Military Region, while Xiang went to Wuhan with the 15th Corps and later served in the Second Artillery. He became head of the

Nanjing combat department in 1970. He was named deputy chief of staff of Nanjing in 1979, soon after Xiang's arrival, then became commander of the Shanghai Garrison in 1983, and deputy regional commander in 1985. Guo participated in Tiananmen, along with Shi Yuxiao, as regional representative on the command side. Unlike Shi, however, Guo apparently does not possess strong political influence. He is not a member of the party central committee and may soon retire. Finally, Guo's career suggests that he is also closely associated with Liu Lunxian (below) and may have taken over as Liu's primary patron after Xiang's departure.

Deputy Commander **Zhang Taiheng** (b.1931) is a native of Shandong and a veteran of the Third FA system and the Fuzhou and Beijing MRs. He rose from platoon leader in the East China Field Army during the Civil War to company commander by 1952 and battalion chief of staff and battalion commander within the Fuzhou MR by 1954. He did not serve in the Korean War. After graduating from the PLA Military Academy in 1961, Zhang continued his rise through various field positions, becoming a regimental commander in 1966, a division deputy chief of staff in 1970, a division commander in 1978, a corps chief of staff in 1981, and commander of the 28th Group Army of the Beijing MR in 1983. The 28th emerged from the earlier 28th Corps of the Third FA, which was stationed in Fujian province during the Korean War and was transferred to Beijing from the Fuzhou MR in the early seventies. Thus, Zhang was almost certainly affiliated with units of the 28th GA throughout his career. He was promoted from Beijing to Chengdu in 1985, becoming a regional deputy commander. He served on the Vietnam border during this period. He was then promoted to command the Chengdu MR during the 1990 reshuffles, but was soon removed, in late 1991, because of apparent negligence that led to a helicopter crash resulting in the deaths of several leading officers of the region. Zhang is apparently too competent an officer to be dismissed from the PLA, however. He spent a brief period of time at the National Defense University in Beijing before being returned to the Nanjing MR as a deputy commander in mid-1992. Zhang is not a member of the party central committee.

Deputy Commander and concurrent Military Region Air Force Commander **Jiang Yutian** (b.1927) is probably also a veteran of the region, and definitely of the Third FA system, although he may have spent several years in the Shenyang MR during the seventies. His career in many ways mirrors that of Nie Kuiju's, although within the PLA Air Force after 1949. Jiang was also a company political officer and deputy battalion leader within units of the East China FA and Third FA during the Civil War and participated in many of the same campaigns as Nie. After graduating from Air Force Aviation School in 1952, he held a series of PLAAF commander posts, probably still within former Third FA units in Eastern China. He may have served in Jilin in 1971-77, possibly attached to the First Air Corps. By 1977, however, he was identified as commander of the Fourth Air Corps in Shanghai. He was then promoted from corps commander to deputy regional air force commander in 1980. After studying at the PLA Military Academy, Jiang was promoted to Nanjing air force commander in 1983. Wang Hai was also named deputy commander of the PLAAF at that time. As with Nie, Jiang attained the additional post of deputy regional commander in 1987 and was not affected by the 1990 reshuffles. Jiang's career suggests possible ties with Third FA leaders such as Zhang Aiping, and a strong association with military reform. Along with Guo and Nie, Jiang may also be slated for retirement in the near future, however. He is not a member of the party central committee.

Deputy Commander **Guo Xizhang** is probably a much younger officer, yet also almost certainly a veteran of the region. He was promoted to his current post during the 1990 reshuffles, from his position as commander of the 12th Group Army, thus skipping one level. This jump may have been due to his possible involvement in Tiananmen, and perhaps also because of his strong support for military reform and modernization. Guo is almost certainly a professional commander similar to Liu Lunxian and probably also a strong supporter of Xi-ang Shouzhi. He is not a member of the party central committee.

Little information is available on Deputy Political Commissar **Wang Yongming**, but he is also probably a product of the region. He was promoted to his current post during the 1990 reshuffles from his previous position as deputy political department director. This was a major jump, up two levels. Since Wang apparently did not participate in Tiananmen, such a move may indicate a close connection with Shi Yuxiao, who probably wanted Wang appointed as his deputy when he became political commissar. He is not a member of the party central committee.

Deputy Political Commissar **Pei Jiuzhou** (b.1929) is one of the few outsiders in the regional leadership. He was transferred laterally from the Lanzhou Military Region during the 1990 reshuffles, after serving there as deputy political commissar and discipline inspection secretary for five years. He is not a Lanzhou veteran, however. He emerged from the Fourth FA system and probably held a series of leading posts in the northeast at the regimental, divisional, and corps levels as a political and military security officer. His long-term service in Shenyang is strongly suggested by the fact that he is identified as political commissar of the Heilongjiang Military District in 1984. He was promoted to serve as deputy commissar of the Lanzhou Military Region during the 1985 cadre exchanges. Pei's background in security work and his appointment to discipline inspection posts suggests that he may watch over the political behavior of leading Nanjing cadres. His background does not reveal any possible links with Yang, however, and he does not hold any leading party posts. He may share some ties with Gu Hui, based on their early service within the Fourth FA system in northeast China. If true, these links could then serve as a connection with the Yangs, if indeed Gu Hui is closely related to Yang Shangkun. Such an indirect connection seems very problematic, however. It is more likely that Pei is simply regarded by Yang as a reliable political officer with conservative credentials, perhaps because of his long-term service in Shenyang. Pei is not a member of the party central committee.

Political Department Director **Lan Baojing** is another outsider. He was promoted to his current post in 1990 from his previous position as political commissar of the Tianjin Garrison Command in the Beijing Military Region, which he had held since at least mid-1987. No other information is available on him. He is not a member of the party central committee.

Little information is available on Deputy Chiefs of Staff **Zheng Bingqing** and **Pei Huailiang**. Zheng has held his post since 1985. Pei was appointed from the post of commander, 21st Group Army, Lanzhou MR. Neither leader is a member of the party central committee.

### Group Army Commands

Commander **Wu Quanxu** of the First Group Army was transferred from political commissar of the same unit during the 1990 reshuffles. Such a transfer is highly unusual. Political

Commissar **Wang Tongzhuo** was promoted from deputy political commissar, 31st Group Army, Nanjing Military Region, during the 1990 reshuffles.

Commander **Chen Xitao** of the 12th Group Army was transferred from commander of the 31st Group Army, Nanjing Military Region, in early 1991, after apparently serving only briefly as head of the 31st. Political Commissar **Wen Zongren** has held his current post since at least March 1986. He served with units of the 12th Group Army sent to Beijing during the Tiananmen crisis. His previous post is not known.

Commander **Liu Lunxian** (b.1943) of the 31st Group Army was transferred from chief of staff, Nanjing Military Region, during the 1990 reshuffles. He is one of the few group army leaders about whom detailed career information is readily available. Liu is a native of Shanghai and a career staff officer with long service within the region, primarily in the area of combat training. He is a clear example of the type of young, professional, better educated military leader developed during the reform period. After serving as a regimental training officer, Liu entered the regional command in 1978 as a deputy section chief within the operations department. He became section chief in 1980 and then transferred two years later to serve as deputy director of the regional combat operations department. During this time, he also graduated from the PLA Military Academy. After graduation, he became a corps chief of staff, and was then jumped several levels in 1985 to become regional chief of staff. In June 1990, Liu was sent back to the group army level to command the 31st Group Army.

Political Commissar **Ren Huancai** has held his current post since at least January 1987. His previous post is not known.

## THE GUANGZHOU MILITARY REGION

### Regional Command

Commander **Zhu Dunfa** (b.1927) is a veteran of the Shenyang MR and a professional officer with a distinguished combat record in both the Chinese Civil War and the Korean War. He served as a company and battalion commander during most of the major campaigns of the Second FA, probably within units of the 16th Corps, and was a regimental commander in Korea, presumably still with the same unit. Unlike other Second FA Corps, the 16th went to Manchuria after the Korean War, and Zhu almost certainly returned with it to become a member of the small Second FA contingent based in the northeast. After graduation from the PLA Military Academy in 1960, he served in a series of commander posts at the division and corps levels. By 1981, he was serving as commander of the 16th Corps, and was promoted to deputy commander of the Shenyang MR in 1985. He was promoted to his current post during the 1990 reshuffles, after exemplary service during Tiananmen as a leader of the Shenyang contingent. Zhu may be close to retirement due to age. He is not a member of the party central committee.

Political Commissar **Zhang Zhongxian** (b.1926) is also a veteran of the Shenyang MR, but with links to the Fourth FA system. During the late forties, Zhang served as a political officer at the company and battalion levels within units of that field army. He held similar posts at the regimental level during the Korean War and apparently remained in Korea until the late fifties. After graduating from the PLA Political Academy in 1963, Zhang held a series of political posts at the divisional and corps levels. By 1978, he was serving as deputy political

commissar of the Jilin MD. This fact, plus his earlier extended stay in Korea, together suggest that Zhang is a veteran of the former 46th Corps, which returned from Korea to Jilin in 1958.<sup>6</sup> Zhang was promoted to political commissar of the Shenyang MR Artillery Corps in 1981 and then to deputy director of the regional political department two years later. In 1985, he was promoted three levels to his present post as Guangzhou MR political commissar. Zhang may also be close to retirement due to age. He was named an alternate of the party central committee in 1982 and a full member in 1987.

Chief of Staff **Chen Xianhua** is a Guangzhou cadre. He was promoted in 1990 from his previous post as commander of Guangzhou's 42nd Group Army, replacing Li Xilin (below). He succeeded Gu Hui as head of the 42nd when the latter was promoted to Jinan in 1985. Before 1985, Chen was attached to the Guangzhou MR command, probably as a deputy chief of staff along with Li Xilin. If Chen came up through the 42nd Group Army, then he is probably closely linked to Gu Hui and thus perhaps through Gu to either Yang Shangkun or You Taizhong. The latter was commander of the region during the mid-eighties. He is also most likely an associate of Li Xilin. As with Gu Hui, however, more information is needed on Chen's early career. He is not a member of the party central committee.

Deputy Commander **Li Xinliang** (b.1936) is a younger high-ranking officer whose military career began after the establishment of communist rule. Little detailed information is known about his background, but he has probably spent most of his career in the region. He is a native of Shandong and entered the PLA in 1953. This suggests that he may have begun his career in the north, perhaps within units of the former Third FA system. If so, he was probably soon transferred to the south. He became commander of the Guangxi Military District in 1984, directly from commander of a border defense tank division, and was then promoted to deputy regional commander in 1988. Li most likely distinguished himself in combat against Vietnam. He also attained a significant level of political connections along the way, as indicated by his election as a full member of the 13th Central Committee in 1987. This fact, plus his apparently rapid rise within the Guangzhou Military Region during the mid-eighties, suggest that Li may be most closely linked to You Taizhong.

Deputy Commander **Li Xilin** (b.1930) is a member of the "southern" Fourth FA contingent. He served as a staff officer in the public security corps in Hubei province in 1952–53 after participating in several northern and central Fourth FA campaigns during the Civil War. This suggests that he was a security officer within the 15th Army of the Fourth FA. According to Whitson, the 15th was deactivated in 1952, and many of its subordinate units redesignated as public security forces.<sup>7</sup> Li continued in public security work in the late fifties, within the Central-South Military Area. He was then brought back into the mainstream PLA and apparently transferred into the Guangzhou MR, where he served in a series of staff and command posts at the regimental and divisional levels during the sixties and early seventies. By 1976 he had become chief of staff of either the 41st or the 42nd Corps. After graduating from the PLA Military Academy in 1980, he was promoted to the regional command level, becoming deputy chief of staff, and then chief of staff in 1985. He became a

<sup>6</sup>No senior leaders of the 46th Corps are present within the top PLA leadership today. It was disbanded sometime after participation in the Sino-Indian Border War of 1962.

<sup>7</sup>Whitson, 1973, p. 327.



deputy commander during the 1990 reshuffles. He is not a member of the party central committee.

Li's background suggests that he is a highly competent professional commander with extensive experience in security work. He may be most closely related to Zhang Wannian, and probably also to Gu Hui, both "southern" Fourth FA veterans and both former top officers in Wuhan and Guangzhou. They probably played important roles in obtaining Li's promotions through those two closely related regions. A third associate could be You Taizhong, although whatever ties exist between the two men are probably not as strong as Li's links with Zhang and Gu. Li could thus serve as an important point of contact within the Guangzhou Military Region command for two nearby regional leaderships. But his loyalties could be in conflict if Gu Hui is a strong supporter of Yang Shangkun, as noted above.

Deputy Commander and concurrent South Sea Fleet Commander **Gao Zhenjia** (b.1929) is a veteran of the Fourth FA system and a native of Liaoning. He entered the new PLA Navy in the early fifties as a trainee in the submarine branch, after brief service during the late forties as a political officer in the South Liaoning and Northeast Military Areas. By 1955, he was a naval captain, and by 1973 he had become a deputy naval commander. After serving as vice president of the PLA Navy Submarine School and then president of the Navy Submarine Academy, Gao became political commissar of the Navy Command Academy (in 1986), and was promoted two years later to his current posts in the region. He is obviously a professional naval officer and an outsider to the region, which suggests that he may be most closely linked to Liu Huaqing and the Navy Faction. Gao is not a member of the party central committee.

Deputy Commander and concurrent Military Region Air Force Commander **Liu Heqiao** (b.1931) has held his current posts since 1987 (one year more than Gao). He is also a professional service officer, with a career limited entirely to the PLA Air Force. After graduation from Air Force Aviation School, he was promoted through a series of PLAAF posts in the field, from pilot in 1950 to deputy corps commander in 1968. He entered the regional command in 1977. Liu's career suggests some relationship to Guangzhou cadres, but he is more likely a close associate of Wang Hai and the PLAAF Faction. He is not a member of the party central committee. Overall, neither Gao nor Liu seems to be a significant figure in the regional leadership.

Deputy Political Commissar **Gao Tianzheng** (b.1931) was also promoted from within the region during the 1990 reshuffles. His previous position was regional political department director, a post he had held since only 1988. However, Gao is not a Guangzhou veteran. He apparently served entirely as a political officer within units of the Beijing Military Region prior to 1988. After participating in the final campaigns of the Civil War and the Korean War, Gao was promoted through the regimental and divisional levels at regular intervals, eventually becoming political commissar of the 38th Group Army alongside Commander Li Jijun. This suggests that he may be a veteran of the Fourth FA system. He reportedly established a good reputation as a political officer during the reform period, which is probably why Beijing promoted him to Guangzhou.<sup>8</sup> More important, he is probably also a close associate of Yang Baibing (and perhaps of Zhang Gong), and thus may be keeping a

<sup>8</sup>*Tangtai* summary of Guangzhou MR leadership, p. 24.

watchful eye on the regional leadership on behalf of the Yangs. He is not a member of the party central committee.

Deputy Political Commissar **Liu Xinzeng** (b.1929) serves as Guangzhou's only other deputy political commissar. He is also an outsider, transferred from a similar post in the Lanzhou Military Region during the 1990 reshuffles. Liu was originally a Second FA political officer, and participated in most of the major Civil War campaigns of the Second FA from eastern to southwest China. After service as a political and personnel officer at the regimental and divisional levels in the Korean War, Liu held a series of commissar posts at the regimental, divisional, and corps levels, becoming a deputy political commissar of the 12th Corps in 1980. He then succeeded Wei Jinshan as the unit's political commissar in 1983, when Guo Xizang became its commander. He was then reassigned as political commissar of the Zhejiang MD in 1985, prior to assuming a post as deputy political commissar of the Lanzhou Military Region in 1988.

Liu's early combat experience in the Civil War and Korea, along with his steady progress through a series of field unit positions after his return to China, without any apparent breaks or transfers, indicates that he is probably a career veteran of the 12th Corps. If so, then he probably is also associated with You Taizhong, the former commander of the 12th and a fellow native of Henan province. This association would give Liu a basis for association with Guangzhou cadres such as Li Xinliang and perhaps Li Xilin, as well as perhaps with Wei Jinshan. Finally, Liu's previous service within the Zhejiang Military District (and in Lanzhou) suggests that he may have been promoted to Guangzhou in order to supervise militia and reserve work in a military region that could experience considerable social unrest in the future. He is not a member of the party central committee.

Political Department Director **Fang Zuqi** previously served as political commissar of the 16th Group Army within the Shenyang Military Region, beginning in 1988. Before that, he was deputy director of the Shenyang MR political department. He was promoted to his current post during the 1990 reshuffles. Fang is not a member of the party central committee. No other information is available on him.

Little information is available on the careers of the three deputy chiefs of staff. **Bi Zifeng** has held his post since early 1986. **Li Qian yuan** and **Song Wenhan** were both appointed after Tiananmen. Li is a member of the party central committee, which is unusual, considering his relatively low rank. However, several group army commanders and political commissars were elected to central committee status at the 13th Party Congress in 1987, in most cases as a result of achievements in combat. Li's membership may be due to combat performance in Yunnan. He was brought into the Guangzhou MR from the Nanjing MR where he served as commander of the First GA from 1985 to 1990. The First GA had an excellent combat record against the Vietnamese at Laoshan. Its former commander, Fu Quanyou, was promoted to MR commander afterward, and Li succeeded him. In addition, the First GA is stationed near Hangzhou, a favorite vacation spot for high party, government, and military leaders. Li probably met many such individuals during his tour of duty with that unit.<sup>9</sup> Thus, he almost certainly has strong support in Beijing and may attain a much more signifi-

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<sup>9</sup>I am grateful to Ellis Melvin for pointing this out to me in a personal correspondence.

cant post following the upcoming 14th Party Congress in late 1992. Neither of the other two deputies is a central committee member.

### **Group Army Commands**

Commander **Gong Gucheng** of the 41st Group Army was transferred or promoted from an unknown post during the 1990 reshuffles. Political Commissar **Liu Yuanjie** was transferred or promoted from an unknown post during the 1990 reshuffles.

Commander **Wen Yuzhu** of the 42nd Group Army was promoted from deputy commander in charge of training of the same unit during the 1990 reshuffles. Political Commissar **Lei Mingqiu** has held his current post since June 1985. Like Li Qianyuan, he was one of the few corps-level officers granted party central committee membership in 1987. His previous post is not known.

Commanding officers, 15th Airborne Army, stationed at Xiaogan, Hubei (under the command of the PLA Air Force): Commander **Jing Xueqin** was promoted from responsible person of the same unit during the 1990 reshuffles. He came to the 15th Airborne from the Basic Department of National Defense University, where he was a student. His posting as a responsible person suggests that he worked under the former commander of the 15th Airborne to familiarize himself with its operations, and is therefore probably a complete outsider. Political Commissar **Zhu Yongqing** was promoted from within the unit, from division political commissar (1984–85) through deputy commissar (August 1991), to his present position, attained some time in late 1991 or January 1992.

## **THE CHENGDU MILITARY REGION**

### **Regional Command**

Commander **Li Jiulong** (b.1929) is a career field officer of the "southern" Fourth FA's 54th Corps, with extensive combat experience and past service as both a regional commander and a logistics officer. A native of Hebei province, Li joined both the PLA and the CCP in 1945, and served in the late forties as a platoon leader and a company commander of the 135th Division, 45th Army, which was part of the 14th Corps, Fourth Field Army. He took part in the major Civil War campaigns of the Fourth FA system before his unit settled in the southwest (in Guangxi), in late 1949. Li became a battalion commander in 1951, most likely with the 135th Division. In July 1952, the 135th became part of the 54th Corps when it was reorganized in Guangdong. The 54th then absorbed the 44th and 45th Corps prior to its deployment to the Korean front. Li apparently entered the Korean War in 1952 with the 54th Corps and probably continued to serve with the same unit until 1985. While in Korea, he served first as a battalion commander, was promoted to deputy regiment commander in 1955, and then became commander of the 135th Division's reconnaissance detachment.

Li probably stayed with the 54th Corps in Korea until it returned to China in 1958. It was deployed to the Chengdu MR, where it suppressed the Lhasa uprising in Tibet in 1959 and fought in the 1962 border war with India. Li's meritorious service in both engagements led to his promotion to regimental commander of the 135th Division in fall 1962. By 1968, he had risen to deputy division commander, and to division commander by 1970. Li fared well

in the Cultural Revolution, and moved with the 54th Corps to Henan in the late sixties or early seventies. The 54th was then under the former Wuhan MR, commanded since December 1973 by Yang Dezhi. Li participated in the 1979 Sino-Vietnamese conflict, as either the commander of the 135th Division or as a deputy commander of the 54th Corps. As a result of this service, he became commander of the 54th in 1980. He held this post until 1985, when he was transferred to become the commander of the Jinan MR, which at that time incorporated Henan from the defunct Wuhan MR. During his first two years in this post, Li worked with Chi Haotian, who was then Jinan MR political commissar and secretary of the MR party committee. Li's transfer to Jinan may have been orchestrated by Yang Dezhi, who had commanded both the Jinan and Wuhan MRs in 1955–73 and 1973–79, respectively. Li served in Jinan until the 1990 reshuffles, when he was replaced by Zhang Wannian and transferred to the GLD as a deputy director. He served in that post only for a little over one year, and was then transferred to command the Chengdu MR, replacing Zhang Taiheng. Both his logistics background<sup>10</sup> and extensive experience in the southwest in large part explain this move. Li became a full member of the 12th Central Committee in September 1985, and was reelected at the 13th Party Congress in November 1987. Unlike many of his contemporaries such as incumbent Lanzhou MR Commander Fu Quanyou, Guangzhou MR Commander Zhu Dunfa, and Jinan MR Commander Zhang Wannian, Li has not received military academy training.

Political Commissar **Gu Shanqing** (b.1931) is also a member of the "southern" Fourth FA contingent. He participated as a junior political officer in the major campaigns of the Fourth FA as it fought across China from northeast to southwest. Gu did not participate in the Korean War, which suggests that he was most likely a cadre of either the 41st, 43rd, or 55th Corps, the only Fourth FA units that were not sent to Korea. They remained in Guangdong on coastal defense duty. Most of Gu's post-1949 career was apparently spent in the Guangzhou MR, particularly in Hunan, with PLA engineering units. He eventually attained the rank of political commissar of the Hunan MD in 1983, after serving as a political officer in a military subdistrict of the province. Gu then moved into the region command, becoming a deputy political commissar of the Guangzhou MR in 1988, the same year he was designated a major general. His promotion to political commissar of the Chengdu MR in 1990 marked his first significant position outside the Guangzhou MR. Gu is not a member of the party central committee.

Chief of Staff **Tao Bojun** (b.1936) has held his current post since 1985, but is not a long-term veteran of the military region. He is a career staff officer specializing in artillery, with probable extensive service within the Wuhan MR. Tao joined the PLA in 1951 and held a series of posts at the regimental level for many years, presumably within artillery units (he graduated from an artillery school in 1955). Tao eventually became a regimental chief of staff in 1976. These positions were probably within units of the Wuhan Military Region, for Tao was promoted in 1979 to serve as head of the combat operations department of Wuhan's artillery headquarters. He was named a division chief of staff in 1981, and then concurrently director of Wuhan's artillery department and a deputy army commander in 1983. Tao was transferred to Chengdu in 1985, when the Wuhan Military Region was abolished. Tao's career identifies him as another member of the "uprooted" former Wuhan leadership. Thus, he may

<sup>10</sup>Many of the so-called "third line" military industries are concentrated in the southwest. In addition, the Chengdu MR is responsible for maintaining logistical lines to Tibet and the Sino-Vietnamese border.

be most closely associated with Zhang Wannian, and through Zhang, with members of the "southern" Fourth FA system. Within the Chengdu Military Region, he may be associated with Ma Bingchen. Both his association with Wuhan and his artillery background indicate that Tao's current political stature and influence within the PLA are not very great, however. He is probably regarded as a competent staff officer whose career has peaked. Tao is not a member of the party central committee.

Deputy Commander **Liao Xilong** (b.1940) is another example of a relatively young, professional field officer rapidly promoted to high office as a result of the reforms. Although almost certainly a veteran of the former Kunming and the Chengdu MRs (and a native of Guizhou), Liao did not join the PLA until 1959 and did not become a party member until 1963. He moved quickly through a series of leadership posts at the platoon, company, and regimental levels in the sixties and seventies, becoming a regimental commander in 1979. After graduation from the PLA Military Academy in 1981, his career advancement accelerated even further. Liao entered the higher ranks of the military immediately afterward, becoming a division commander by 1983, commander of the 14th Corps in 1984, and a deputy regional commander in 1985. He was named a major general in 1988. His loyalty and capabilities were probably most clearly demonstrated during his service as commander of the Yunnan Front Headquarters (facing Vietnam) in the early eighties. While division commander, Liao led his unit in capturing Zheyinshan from Vietnam. Such achievements probably led to his rapid promotion to the regional level. His career suggests that Liao is a long-term veteran of the former Second FA's 14th Corps. You Taizhong and Wang Chenghan probably played key roles in advancing Liao into the higher ranks of the military region. He may also be close to Wang's successor, Fu Quanyou. He is not a member of the party central committee.

Deputy Commander **Ma Bingchen** (b.1928) is from the former Kunming MR, which was incorporated into the Chengdu MR in 1985. Ma is a professional field officer with considerable experience as both a political commissar and a commander. He participated in the major campaigns of the Fourth FA, including the liberation of Hainan, but did not serve in Korea. In the fifties and sixties, he held a series of field posts at the company, battalion, regimental, divisional, and corps levels, attaining the rank of deputy corps chief of staff in 1969. Ma served throughout most of the seventies as a deputy commander of the Guizhou Military District (then under the Kunming Military Region), before becoming a deputy corps commander in 1978. In this capacity, he probably took part in the 1979 war with Vietnam, which would account for his subsequent enrollment in the PLA Military Academy (graduated in 1980) and promotion to corps commander in 1983. Ma first served at the regional level in 1984 as director of an unidentified regional logistics department. He was still attached to the Kunming MR in 1984, representing it at the National People's Congress. His stint as an MR logistics department director must have begun in Kunming and shifted to Chengdu. He has been a Chengdu deputy commander since 1986, and was named a lieutenant general in 1988. He is not a member of the party central committee.

Ma Bingchen's career suggests that he is probably an uprooted "southern" Fourth FA cadre. He may have begun his military career with units of the former 43rd Corps under the 15th Army, which is the only Fourth FA corps that participated in the Hainan campaign but did not serve in Korea, and was based in the Wuhan MR for many years. If so, then Ma may be closely associated with Gu Shanqing and Zhang Wannian, and may have succeeded Zhang to become commander of the 43rd in 1983, when the latter was promoted to serve as deputy

head of the Wuhan Military Region. Yet Ma's extended service within the Guizhou Military District suggests that he may also be one of the few former Fourth FA cadres who landed in the Kunming Military Region after 1949. Indeed, it seems unlikely that Ma would be transferred out of the Wuhan Military Region to serve for many years in Kunming, and then be returned to Wuhan afterward to assume leading posts in the 43rd Corps. In any event, whether associated with Gu Shanqing and Zhang Wannian or with the Kunming Military Region, Ma is probably not a particularly influential figure within the Chengdu MR and will probably be retired in the near future.

Deputy Commander and concurrent Military Region Air Force Commander **Xie Decai** (b.1927) was apparently appointed to both posts in late 1991. Unfortunately, little information is available on Xie's previous career postings. He was first identified in April 1985 as commander of a PLAFAF unit in Liaoning, probably a division of the First Air Army under the Shenyang MR. In May 1987, he was identified as commander of the First Air Army. In September of the same year, Xie traveled to North Korea and received a second class "National Flag Medal" for supporting Korean unification and strengthening Sino-Korean friendship. This information suggests that Xie is probably a professional PLAFAF officer with Korean War experience, similar to other PLAFAF leaders such as Wang Hai. He may also have been associated with PLA units from the northeast, perhaps of the "northern" Fourth FA system. Finally, Xie was identified in early 1992 as a standing committee member of the Chengdu MR Party Committee. He apparently is not a member of the party central committee, however.

Little is known about Deputy Commander **Jiang Hongquan**. Until recently, his regional leadership post almost certainly derived from the great importance of his concurrent position as commander of the Xizang (Tibet) Military District. He was appointed to both posts in May 1991, after becoming deputy commander and commander of the MD in 1982 and 1984. However, he is apparently no longer concurrent Xizang MD Commander, although he still holds the post of MR deputy commander. More information is needed to determine why Jiang was removed as MD commander, but he is probably still regarded by Beijing, and no doubt by Deng Xiaoping in particular, as an extremely loyal officer. Jiang entered the party central committee as an alternate member in 1985 and became a full member in 1987.

Deputy Political Commissar **Wang Yongning** was appointed in May 1990. He is a veteran of the Guangzhou Military Region, where he served in 1958 as a regimental political commissar of the now defunct 55th Corps. In 1987 he was identified as political commissar of the Guilin Ground Forces Academy in Guangxi, and he was promoted to his current position in May 1990 from this post. He was also a deputy to the Sixth and Seventh National People's Congresses from the Guangzhou Military Region. Wang's Guangzhou background suggests that his most likely high-level patron is You Taizhong. Another possible associate is Gu Shanqing. He is not a member of the party central committee.

Deputy Political Commissar **Shao Nong** (b.1928), also appointed in May 1990, is a clear veteran of the Chengdu Military Region. His early unit affiliations are unknown. After service as a political instructor in the Korean War, Shao held a series of leading posts in the political and propaganda departments within an army headquarters, most likely in the southwest. In 1978, he attained his first position at the regional level, as director of the Chengdu Propaganda Department. He then advanced to deputy director (1983) and director (1985) of the Chengdu Political Department. His lengthy service within the region and his entry into the

highest levels of the regional leadership during the height of the reforms suggest that Shao is a trusted Deng supporter. Shao may also be close to Wan Haifeng, and perhaps through him, with Zhang Taiheng. He could also enjoy a close relationship with Yang Baibing, who served in similar political posts within Chengdu. Subordinate associates almost certainly include his former deputy within the political department, Zheng Xianbin, who was promoted to replace him as political department director. Shao's age suggests that he is likely to be retired in the near future, however. He is not a member of the party central committee.

Little is known about new Political Department Director **Zheng Xianbin**. As noted above, he replaced Shao Nong, rising from the deputy director slot, which suggests that he is probably a veteran of the region. He was also newly elected as a regional deputy to the 7th National People's Congress in the late eighties. He is not a member of the party central committee.

Even less is known about the five deputy chiefs of staff for Chengdu. **Xu Zejun** and **Yang Anzhong** have held their posts since early 1988 but have not been active in recent years. **Zhang Shuyun** arrived in 1990 from the Nanjing MR, where he had been deputy chief of staff since 1986. **Zhang Changshun**, also a 1990 appointee, was commander of the Sichuan MD from 1985 on. **Wei Zhaosheng** was appointed deputy chief of staff in 1986. None is a member of the party central committee.

### Group Army Commands

Commander **Chen Shijun** of the 13th Group Army was promoted from division commander in 1985. In addition to being elected an alternate member of the central committee in 1987, Chen was enrolled at the Central Party School for a short course in mid-1991, suggesting that he is a promising younger officer being groomed for more important positions. Political Commissar **Xiao Huaishu** has held his current post since at least August 1988, when he was promoted from deputy political commissar within the same unit.

Commander **Wang Zuxun** of the 14th Group Army seems to be a veteran of the former Kunming MR, and probably of the 14th. He was a deputy corps commander before assuming the Yunnan MD command in the Chengdu MR in 1985. Political Commissar **Chen Peizhong** was a division political commissar of the Kunming MR in 1983, probably of the 14th Corps. He was identified as secretary of the DIC of the 14th GA in 1987, and deputy political commissar in 1988.

## THE LANZHOU MILITARY REGION

### Regional Command

Commander **Fu Quanyou** (b.1930) is the only other veteran of the First FA system among the regional PLA leadership. Most of Fu's professional military career was almost certainly spent with units of the First Corps, which later became part of the First Group Army. He served as a deputy company commander with the Northwest Field Army in the late forties, and received a citation for his actions during major campaigns in the Lanzhou area. Hence, he is by no means a total stranger to the region currently under his command. Yet his most important personal affiliations no doubt were formed outside the northwest, since the First

Corps did not remain in that area after 1949. Fu served in Korea in 1953–56 as a battalion commander, almost certainly with the First Corps. He then attended the PLA Higher Military Academy. After graduation in 1960, he rose rapidly through the regimental and divisional levels, becoming corps chief of staff in 1981, after the First Corps had been moved from the former Wuhan MR to Nanjing. He eventually became commander of the First Corps in 1983, serving alongside Shi Yuxiao. He and Shi led elements of the corps in combat against the Vietnamese. Fu's success in employing innovative infantry tactics against Vietnam in 1984–85 led to his subsequent jump from a Nanjing corps commander to head of the Chengdu MR in 1985. During his five-year period of service in Chengdu, Fu directed the use of MR troops in successfully enforcing martial law in Tibet, thus further raising his stature in Beijing. He was also responsible for the Yunnan front. He was transferred to his current post during the 1990 reshuffles. Fu has been a member of the party central committee since 1985.

Political Commissar **Cao Pengsheng** (b.1930) is probably one of the small number of former Fourth FA cadres who served extensively in East China. After participating in the major northeast campaigns of the Fourth FA, Cao held a series of commissar posts in various security and procuratorate organs at the divisional level and in a corps headquarters. He apparently did not participate in the Korean War. During the seventies, he served as a political commissar at the regimental and divisional levels, possibly with the 54th Corps (part of the Fourth FA system). After graduation from the PLA Political Academy in 1979, Cao held several political posts at the corps level, including corps political commissar. In 1985, he was appointed as political commissar of the Shandong MD. Three years later, he was named a major general and promoted to deputy political commissar of the Jinan MR. He was elevated to the top political slot within the Lanzhou MR during the 1990 reshuffles, in large part because of his loyal service as a senior member of the Martial Law Command during the Tiananmen crisis. His capabilities in security and propaganda work no doubt also played a major role in that decision. Cao is a member of the party central committee's Discipline Inspection Commission headed by Qiao Shi. He is not a member of the party central committee, however.

Little information is available on Chief of Staff **Chi Yunxiu**. His previous post was director of the logistics department within the Guangzhou Military Region and before that he was a deputy chief of staff of the Guangzhou MR. He is probably a Guangzhou veteran, but was transferred to Lanzhou in 1990 to strengthen logistics and other rear services capabilities in the northwest, perhaps in anticipation of future unrest. He is not a member of the party central committee.

Deputy Commander **Wang Ke** (b.1931) is concurrently commander of the Xinjiang Military District. He is most likely an artillery field officer from the Third FA system and a veteran Lanzhou cadre. He served as a political instructor at the regimental level in 1949, and participated in several major Third FA campaigns. After service in the Korean War as first a battalion commander, and then a deputy commander and concurrently chief of staff of an artillery regiment, Wang served for several years in the PLA Artillery School in Beijing. His earliest identifiable position within the Lanzhou MR was as training department director of the Wuwei Artillery School in Gansu, in 1962. He later served as deputy commander and political commissar of a garrison division in Lanzhou, in 1970–78. He then became a division and corps commander. He became deputy commander of the Xinjiang Military District in



1986, prior to his promotion to regional deputy commander during the 1990 reshuffles, and was thus jumped several ranks. This most likely occurred as a result of distinguished service in coping with minority unrest in the tense Xinjiang region during 1988–89. He was identified as commander of the Xinjiang MD in June 1992.

Wang probably serves today as Fu Quanyou's chief assistant in maintaining order in Lanzhou. Wang's service background suggests that he served within the 21st Corps of the former Third FA, although his presence in the MR precedes the arrival of the 21st, which was moved from the Beijing area to Lanzhou, probably in the late sixties. The 21st was not among the vast majority of former Third FA units based in East China after the Korean War, so Wang almost certainly has no ties to any mainstream Third FA leaders. He may have served under Zhang Aiping as a very junior officer of the 21st Corps in 1949, however. Zhang was at that time a deputy commander of the Seventh Army under Wang Jianan, which commanded the 21st Corps. Wang Ke is not a member of the party central committee.

Deputy Commander and concurrent Military Region Air Force Commander **Sun Jinghua** (b.1929) is a former fighter pilot, with a distinguished combat record from the Korean War period. He has held a variety of PLAAF positions within military regions since the mid-fifties. Sun arrived in the Lanzhou MR in 1987 from the Shenyang MR, where he had served as commander of the Third Air Army in Dalian from 1968 to 1980, and as a deputy commander of the Shenyang MR Air Force from 1980 on. He is not a member of the party central committee.

Little information is available on Deputy Commander **Chen Chao**. He was appointed in July 1990. Chen's background is in the GSD, where in 1982 he served as deputy director in charge of militia affairs, and then in 1985 as director of the Mobilization Department. He is not a member of the party central committee.

Deputy Political Commissar **Gong Yongfeng** was promoted during the 1990 reshuffles. He was noted to be in Shaanxi in 1983, and became political commissar of the 47th Group Army, based in central Shaanxi, in 1985. In the latter post he led his troops on a mission to the Yunnan front during 1986–87, along with Commander Qian Shugen. Little else is known about Gong. He is probably a Lanzhou veteran, however, since outsiders are rarely brought into a military region to serve as a group army commissar. He is not a member of the party central committee.

Deputy Political Commissar **Wang Maorun** (b.1936) was also promoted from within the region during the 1990 reshuffles. He had served since 1985 as political department director. Wang is a definite outsider, however, having served for many years as a political officer within the Jinan Military Region. Rising through a series of political department posts within Jinan during the sixties and seventies, he eventually became a corps deputy political commissar in 1983, before entering the PLA Military Academy. He was promoted out of the region to head the Lanzhou Political Department immediately after graduation, in 1985. Wang's career suggests few links to current PLA leaders. Yang Dezhi may have taken an interest in his early development in Jinan, but cannot be considered a likely patron, since Wang did not enter the higher ranks of the regional command until after Yang had departed. Similarly, other past Jinan leaders such as Li Jiulong, Chi Haotian, and Song Qingwei did not assume top positions until after Wang had been transferred to Lanzhou. One possible former associate is of course Cao Pengsheng. Both men spent many years as political officers

in Jinan, and both were serving as corps-level political officers during the early eighties. Wang could possibly seek to attach himself to the more rapidly rising Cao as a patron, given his apparent lack of influential associates. He is not a member of the party central committee.

Little information is available on the new Political Department Director **Kong Zhaowen**. He was promoted from within the region during the 1990 reshuffles. His previous position was political commissar of the Shaanxi Military District, a post he held since at least 1986. This suggests that Kong is a veteran of the region, since few commissars are brought in from other military regions to serve at the district level. His promotion was probably a reward for exemplary service in conducting political work among the militia and reserves, and perhaps for playing an important role in maintaining order within Shaanxi during the tumultuous events of spring 1989. He is not a member of the party central committee.

Deputy Chief of Staff **Liang Peizhen** has been in place since mid-1988. He is probably a Lanzhou veteran, but more data are needed to confirm such a hypothesis. He is not a member of the party central committee. The remaining Deputy Chief of Staff **Liu Yuzhai** is apparently a very recent appointment. He is also not a party central committee member.

Finally, because of its extreme sensitivity to the central government, the leadership of the Xinjiang Military District should also be mentioned. Military District Commander **Wang Ke** is discussed above. His predecessor in this post from 1987–92 was Gao Huanchang (b.1924), a professional combat officer from Hebei with long-term experience in the northwest and a full member of the 13th Central Committee. Military District Political Commissar **Tang Guangcai** (b.1929) has a similar background to both Wang and Gao. A native of Hebei, he has extensive experience as a commissar in the north and northwest. Prior to his assignment as political commissar of the Xinjiang Military District, he was political commissar of the South Xinjiang Military District. He assumed his current post in 1985 and was a deputy to the 13th Party Congress. Wang Ke will probably be promoted to the central committee at the upcoming 14th Party Congress.

### Group Army Commands

Commander **Qian Shugen** of the 21st Group Army was transferred from commander of the 47th Group Army, Lanzhou Military Region, during the 1990 reshuffles. Qian is a veteran of the 47th and an alternate central committee member. He became commander of that unit in 1985 at the age of 46, and led it in combat against the Vietnamese in 1987. Political Commissar **Li Baoxiang** has held his current post since at least April 1987. His previous post is not known.

Commander **Guo Boxiong** of the 47th Group Army was promoted from deputy chief of staff, Lanzhou Military Region, during the 1990 reshuffles. Political Commissar **Zhou Yongshun** was appointed in 1990, promoted from political department director of either the 47th or the 21st GA.



## **Appendix D**

### **EVOLUTION OF THE FIELD ARMY SYSTEM, 1927-1992**



1927–1930		1985–1992*
(Red Army Period)		Group Armies by MR
Xiang-E-Xi Soviet		
4th Corps (West Hunan)	2nd Army	Beijing MR (moved from Beijing MR in 1974)
6th Corps (West Hubei)		
E-Yu-Wan Soviet		
New 4th Corps	4th Army	Nanjing MR Chengdu MR (moved from Yunnan-Kunming MR probably after 1970)
15th Corps		Chengdu MR Nanjing MR
		Nanjing MR (moved from Zhejiang-Nanjing MR after 1980) Lanzhou MR (moved from Shanxi-Beijing MR probably in the 1970s) Liaoning-Shenyang MR (moved back to Shenyang MR by 1975) Beijing MR Jinan MR Beijing MR (moved from Jiangsu-Nanjing MR in late 1970) Beijing MR (moved from Fuzhou MR in the early 1970s) Nanjing MR
Central (Jiangxi) Soviet		
		Beijing MR (moved from Liaoning-Shenyang MR in 1966-67) Shenyang MR Shenyang MR Guangzhou MR (moved from Guangdong-Guangzhou MR in the 1960s or early 1970s) Guangzhou MR Lanzhou MR (moved from Hunan-Guangzhou MR around 1970) Jinan MR (moved from Sichuan-Chengdu MR in late 1960s or early 1970s)
3rd Corps		Beijing MR (moved from Hebei-Beijing MR sometime after 1980) Shenyang MR Beijing MR Jinan MR
4th Corps		
5th Corps		
7th Corps		
20th Corps		

Notes: This chart is an extension of Whitson's (1970).

\* Many of the corps were disbanded, consolidated.

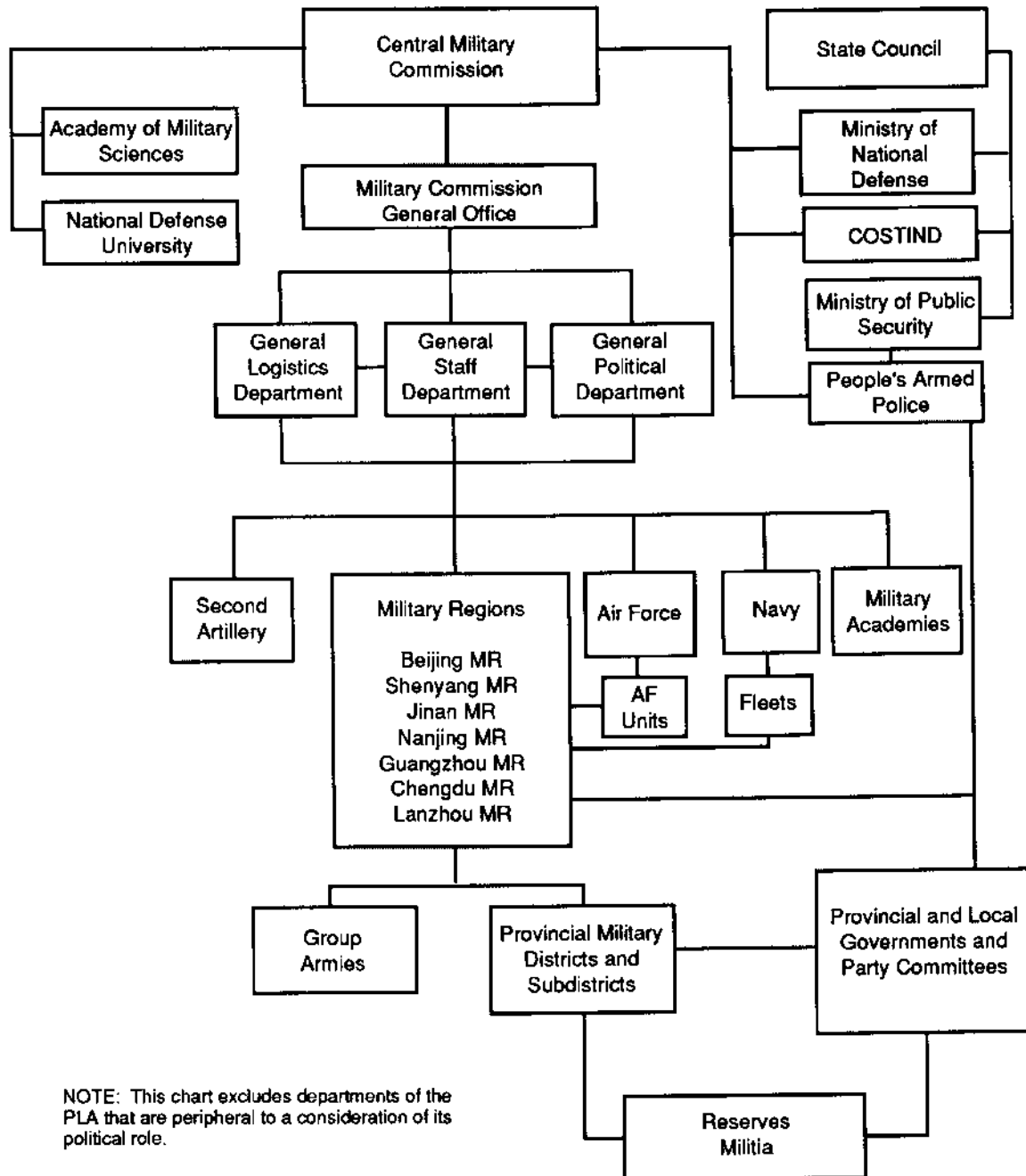
\*\* According to Whitson, p. 114, by 1954 all other corps were in Xinjiang, where most had been serving at the end of the Civil War. The 1st Corps absorbed the 3rd Corps at that time.

\*\*\* Indicates service in Korea during part or all of the war.



## Appendix E

### MAJOR DEPARTMENTS OF THE CHINESE MILITARY



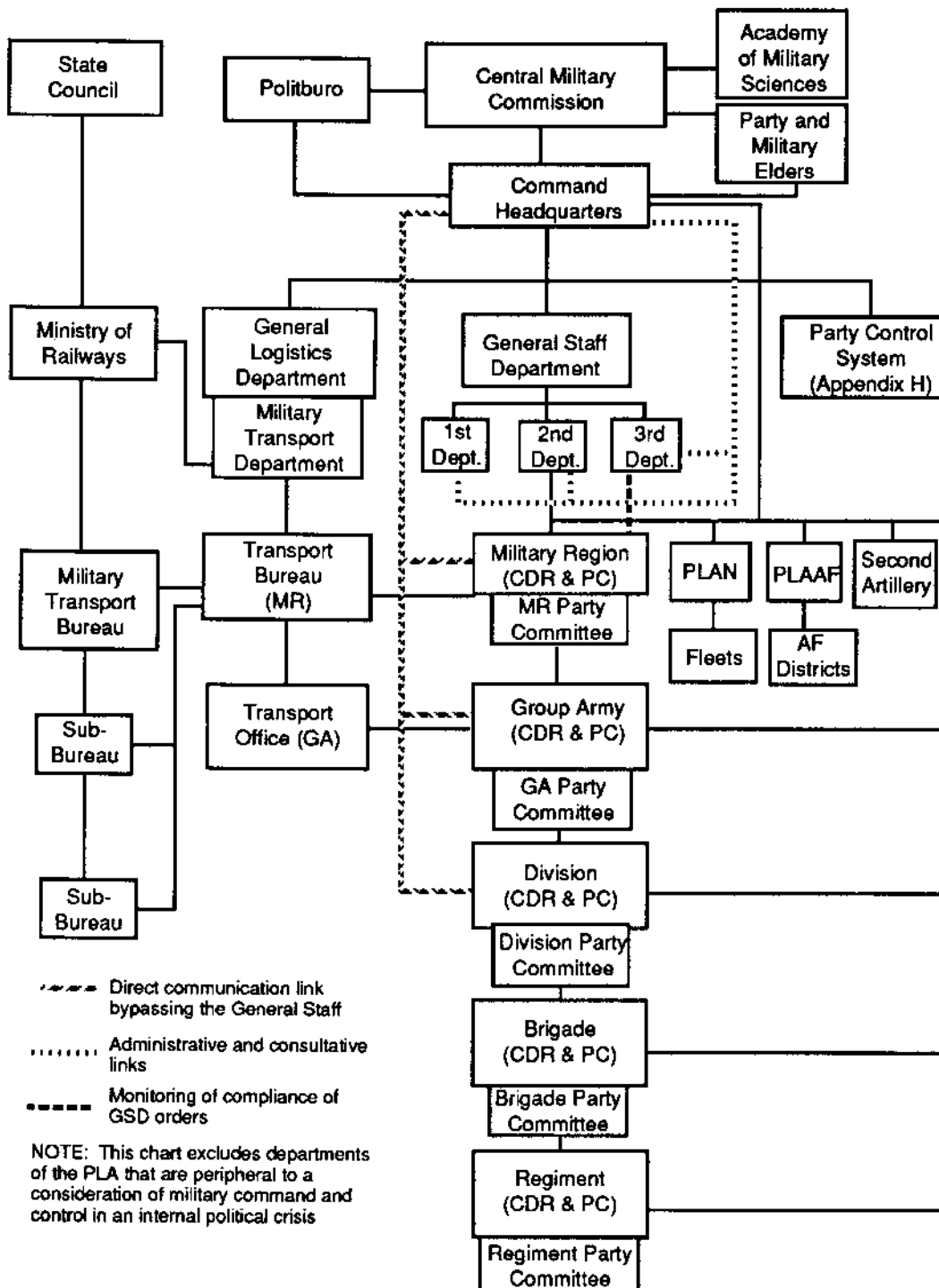
NOTE: This chart excludes departments of the PLA that are peripheral to a consideration of its political role.



## Appendix F

## COMMAND AND CONTROL STRUCTURE: MAIN PLA FORCES

**(TO THE REGIMENTAL LEVEL)**

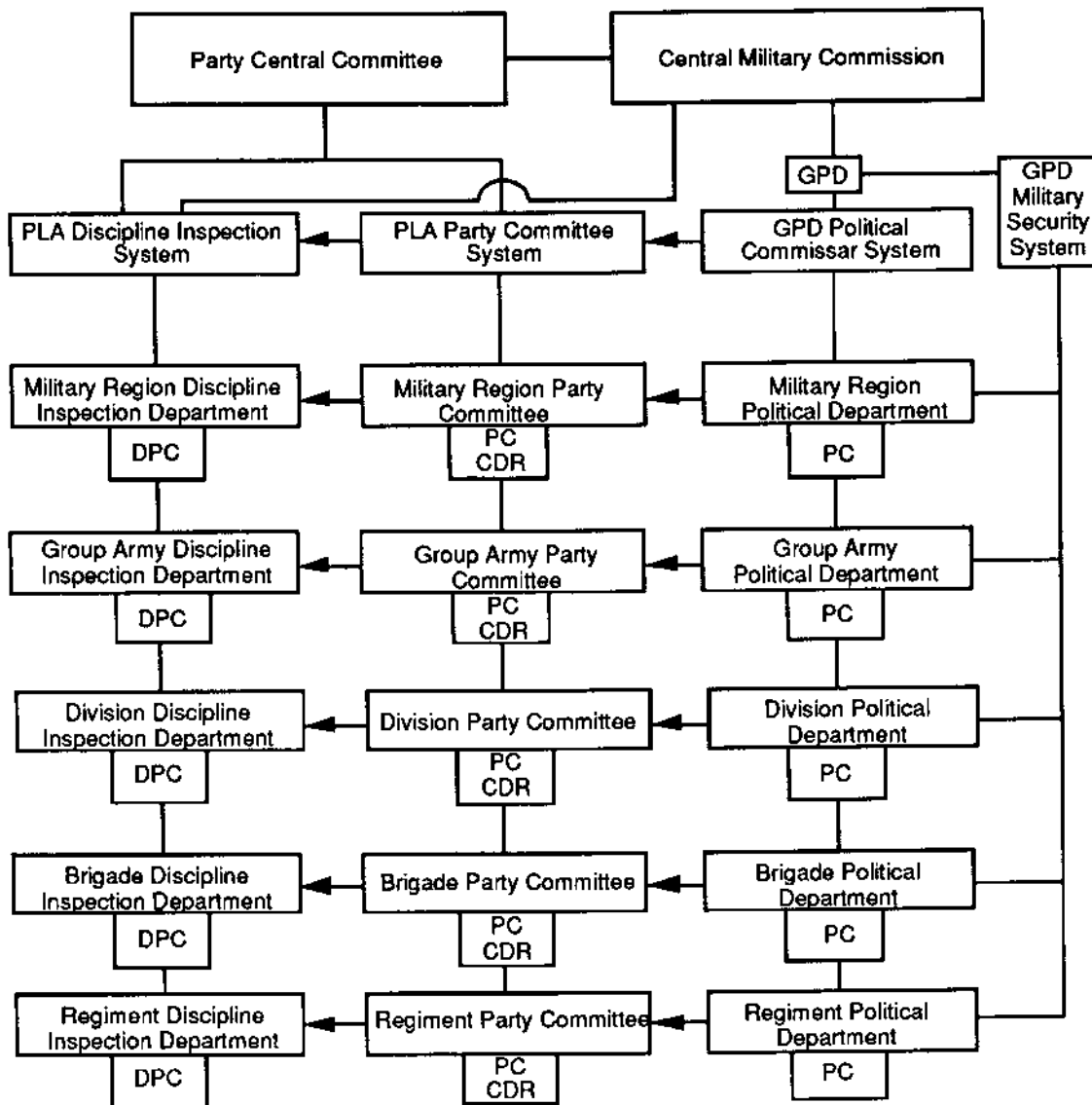


## **Appendix G**

### **COMMAND AND CONTROL STRUCTURE: PAP, RESERVE, AND MILITIA FORCES**



# **Appendix H** **PARTY CONTROL SYSTEM: MAIN PLA FORCES** **(TO THE REGIMENTAL LEVEL)**



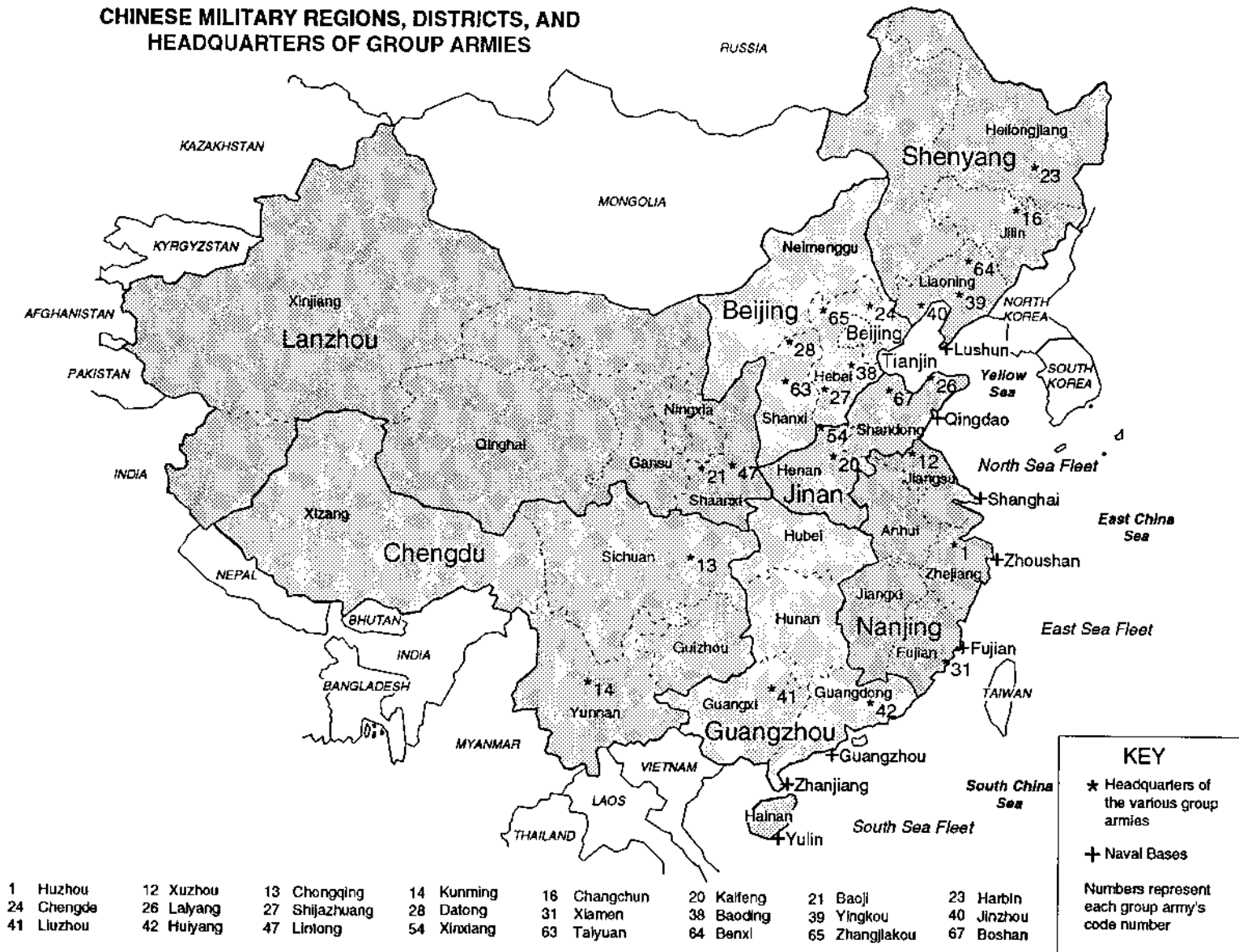
← Line of influence



## **Appendix I**

### **MAP OF CHINESE MILITARY REGIONS**

# CHINESE MILITARY REGIONS, DISTRICTS, AND HEADQUARTERS OF GROUP ARMIES



**Appendix J**  
**14th PARTY CONGRESS: PARTY AND MILITARY LEADERSHIP**

**POLITBURO**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Position</b>
Jiang Zemin*	Chairman, CMC, Party General Secretary
Li Peng*	Premier
Qiao Shi*	Chairman, CCP CC Political and Legal Affairs Committee; Secretary, DIC
Li Ruihuan*	Secretary, CCP-CC Secretariat
Zhu Rongji*	Vice Premier
Liu Huaqing*	Vice-Chairman, CMC
Hu Jintao*	Party Secretary, Xizang (Tibet Autonomous Region)
Chen Xitong	Mayor of Beijing
Ding Guangen	Secretary, CCP-CC Secretariat
Jiang Chunyun	Party Secretary, Shandong
Li Lanqing	Minister of Trade
Li Tieying	State Councillor; Minister, State Education Commission
Qian Qichen	Foreign Minister
Tan Shaowen	Party Secretary, Tianjin
Tian Jiyun	Vice Premier
Wei Jianxing	Minister of Supervision
Wu Bangguo	Party Secretary, Shanghai
Xie Fei	Party Secretary, Guangdong
Yang Baibing	Director, GPD
Zou Jiahua	Vice Premier

NOTE: \* denotes politburo standing committee members. Positions listed are as of early October 1992.



# PLA CENTRAL COMMITTEE

## Full Members (Total 43)

Name	Position
Cao Pengsheng	Political Commissar, Lanzhou MR
Cao Shuangming	Deputy Commander, Shenyang MR; Commander, Regional Air Force
Chi Haotian	Chief of the General Staff
Ding Wenchang	Director, Political Dept., PLA Air Force
Ding Henggao	Director, COSTIND
Fu Quanyou	Commander, Lanzhou MR
Gao Tianzheng	Dep. Political Commissar, Guangzhou MR
Gu Hui	Commander, Nanjing MR
Gu Shanqing	Political Commissar, Chengdu MR
Lei Mingqiu	Political Commissar, 42nd GA, GZMR
Li Jijun	Director, CMC General Office
Li Jing	Deputy Commander, PLA Navy
Li Jiulong	Commander, Chengdu MR
Li Laizhu	Deputy Commander, Beijing MR
Li Wenqing	Deputy PC, National Defense University
Li Xiling	Deputy Commander, Guangzhou MR
Liu Anyuan	PC, Second Artillery
Liu Huaqing	Vice-Chairman, CMC; PBSC
Liu Jingsong	Commander, Shenyang MR
Shi Yuxiao	Political Commissar, Nanjing MR
Song Keda	Political Commissar, Shenyang MR
Song Qingwei	Political Commissar, Jinan MR
Tong Baocun	Deputy Commander, Shenyang MR
Wang Chengbin	Commander, Beijing MR
Wang Hai	Commander, PLA Air Force
Wang Ke	Commander, Xinjiang MD
Wang Ruilin	Secretary, DIC; member, CMC

<b>Name</b>	<b>Position</b>
Wei Jinshan	Political Commissar, PLA Navy
Xu Huizi	Deputy Chief of the General Staff
Yang Baibing	Director, GPD
Yang Dezhong	Dir., Central Guard Bureau; 1st Dep. Dir., CCP-CC General Office
Yang Guoliang	Deputy Commander, Second Artillery
Yu Yongbo	Deputy Director, GPD
Zhang Gong	Political Commissar, Beijing MR
Zhang Lianzhong	Commander, PLA Navy
Zhang Meiyuan	Commander, 38th GA, Beijing MR
Zhang Wannian	Commander, Jinan MR
Zhang Zhen	President, National Defense University
Zhao Nanqi	Director, GLD
Zhou Keyu	Political Commissar, GLD
Zhou Wenyan	Deputy Director, GPD
Zhou Yushu	Commander, People's Armed Police
Zhu Dunfa	Commander, Guangzhou MR

#### **Alternate Members (Total 21)**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Position</b>
Geng Quanli	Political Commissar, Tibet MD
Gong Gucheng	Commander, 41st GA, Guangzhou MR
Hao Yan	Dir., Xian Satellite Monitor and Control Center, COSTIND
He Qizong	Deputy Chief of the General Staff
Hong Guangkai	Dir., Second Department, GSD
Lan Baojing	Dir., Political Dept., Nanjing MR
Li Jinai	Deputy Dir., GPD
Liang Guanglie	Commander, 54th GA, Jinan MR

Name	Position
Liao Wenhai	Commandant, PLA General Hospital
Qian Guoliang	Commander, 27th GA, Beijing MR
Qian Shugen	Commander, 21st GA, Lanzhou MR
Shen Binyi	Commander, Shanghai Naval Base
Su Rong	Sec., DIC, Shanghai Naval Base
Tan Naida	Pol. Commissar, 39th GA, Shenyang MR
Wen Zongren	Pol. Commissar, 12th GA, Nanjing MR
Wu Yuqian	Commander, 23rd GA, Shenyang MR
Wu Guangyu	Dep. Commander, Nanjing MR AF
Xu Qiliang	Commander, Air Force, Fujian
Yue Haiyan	Political Commissar, North Sea Fleet Base
Zhang Qiuxiang	Political Commissar, 63rd GA, Beijing MR
Zheng Xianbin	Dir., Polit. Dept., Chengdu MR

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